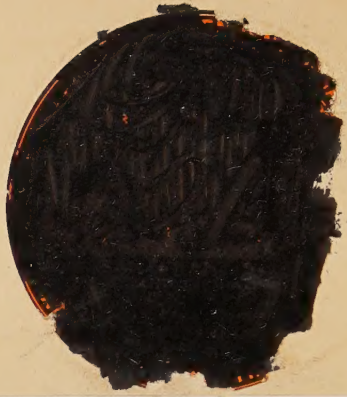
THE POWER OF INDIA

MICHAEL PYM



THE POWER OF INDIA

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A Yogi.

THE POWER OF INDIA

MICHAEL PYM

ILLUSTRATED

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THE POWER OF INDIA

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in the United States of America

To

LADY HYDARI, AND MRS. WILLIAM ASTOR CHANLER

AND TO

GURU MAHARAJA MUNI SHRI SHANTI VIJAYAJI

WITH PROFOUND AFFECTION

FOREWORD

I DO not wish to claim for this book any great authority. It is merely the record of some years of study and observation in India, for which purpose I wandered over most of the country. As far as possible I have tried to avoid statistics and too much official or semiofficial documentation, because it has been my experience through years of newspaper work that these can be interpreted to suit almost any theory.

My sincere thanks are due to the India Office, to many officials of the Government of India, to the Indian Princes who so generously entertained me, and to numerous British and Indian friends in India who helped me to see and understand something of that vast country.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. A. J. Holcombe of the *Herald Tribune,* who gave me the commission which sent me to India, and to Miss Valentine Thomson and Miss Maxine Davis, who so patiently read and criticised the MS.

Barrytown-on-the-Hudson.
July 31st, 1930.

MICHAEL PYM.

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THE POWER OF INDIA

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

WHITE ROAD, WHITE MOON . . .

"WHITE road, white moon . . ." It is the oldest, the most widely known, of all the gypsy songs; the one you will hear wherever gypsies pass, across the plains of Hungary, through the cities of Europe, over the white roads of the world.

I have heard it in such widely different places as Spain and New York, and in time it came to represent for me all the secret nostalgia of my being; a nostalgia for something I could never clearly define. One watched these singing gypsies and wondered. Whence did they come? How did they get into their music such strange, beautiful rhythms, unlike the round fullness of our compositions? What was it that so differentiated their faces from ours? They were so alive. You never saw among them that appalling white blankness of a Western crowd, whose eyes are so often like windows in which the glass has been smashed; dead, inexpressive.

Once a gypsy told me, "We come from India." India! What an amazing appeal India has to the imagination of the world. How, in one way or another, it has invariably played a deciding part in the destiny of nations. Think what would have happened if Napoleon had gone on to India! He felt the appeal. He followed his star east, east. . . . And then turned back to his doom.

But for India there would be no British Empire. How the old Queen, Victoria, loved that Empire of hers which she never saw! India, round which the politics of the world revolved for centuries, perhaps still revolve. Looking for India, Christopher

Columbus found America. Still looking for India, Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope. To ensure a market for Indian tea, England embarked on that disastrous policy which lost her the American Colonies. She fought the French Emperor in Europe, but would she have fought so desperately had not India also been the prize? She held Gibraltar, she held Egypt, she intrigued passionately for the Suez Canal; all for India.

India has changed and civilised the habits of Europe. Did not baths and fresh linen come from India, at an epoch when gentlemen went to Court holding pomander balls to their noses, because human beings frankly smelt. She had altered the thought of Europe. What a profound effect upon German philosophy had been caused by Max Mueller's rediscovery of Sanscrit, poor though his translations were! Even Voltaire had been touched by the thought of India. Through Persia something of her thought had reached France.

There was the Theosophical Society, that immense organisation based upon India and Indian philosophy—perhaps at fourth hand, perhaps all muddled up—but what an appeal it made to hundreds of thousands, simply because it linked with India.

Everywhere in the West are people who, somehow, do not quite fit in with their times, who are not exactly satisfied with "progress" and all it implies. They are intelligent people; people who, perhaps, have suffered, and so been brought to face themselves a little more honestly than the average. They want to know the meaning of existence, or, failing that, at least to be convinced of some reason for living. It is difficult, nowadays, to drug such people with happy commonplaces about God and Christianity; they went through a war which showed up Christianity once and for all. It is useless to tell them, "Oh, but Christianity isn't Christ." They know that Christianity, the Church, is all we know of Christ except a few sayings, which are now almost incomprehensible.

Nor can they be hypnotised with new social theories. They have seen Russia and realised only too well that new social theo-

ries are only old ones a little more openly stated, and stood on their heads. And misery is not removed, only shifted from one place to another.

Nor does science convince them; for in their lifetimes they have seen the whole basis of science changed, not once, but over and over. They know that only half-educated people believe that science can say, "Why"; that scientists themselves dare not profess more than "Perhaps this is how . . ."

In spite of all the materialists, who explain events in terms of economics or climatics or some other *"ic,"* there is an incalculable quantity in mankind, the "X" of human nature. It is indicated by that sort of dissatisfaction which we call "spiritual hunger." Not everybody yields to it: but neither does it always yield to material things. Watch America. Having almost everything, yet her people are not satisfied. They must have more—more. Why do people drink wildly, dance wildly, motor at top speed, work like madmen? Why do wealthy men and women race backwards and forwards across oceans to France, to Italy, to London, and back again? If they never stop to think, it is because instinctively they dare not. Surrounded by an immense, apparently solid, materialism, they are haunted by a sense of its unreality.

For years such thoughts had come to me, more and more insistently as time went on, and I saw at first hand the destruction of war, and the greater madness of peace. I travelled in many countries. I mixed, literally, with every stratum of society. I read everything I could find, and that meant a great deal. With increasing force I realised the mental insincerity prevailing in the West. So many "great" men, I saw, just talked. Because they wrapped up their theories in a jargon few people could understand, they got away with murder. People like Bergson could get hold of a half truth and spend their lives writing books upon books about it, so beautifully wound about with words that, in sheer desperation, for fear of being thought themselves unintelligent, people acclaimed them as great philosophers. Others, moralists of a conventional type, did their utmost to impose their ideas by force upon the people, not be-

cause they were really tyrannical, but in order to keep themselves convinced of things about which secretly, deep down, they were not quite sure.

It sounds, perhaps, a little sweeping, but how many revolutionary movements in politics, in art, in music, have not indicated clearly this passion of unrest, of hunger for a new basis, a new solution. Nothing proves more strikingly the "It's all wrong" feeling, than the orgy of debunking which is even now proceeding: debunking history, debunking heroism, debunking religion, but never, unhappily, quite debunking oneself.

"White road, white moon . . ." the song came to me like a breath of unknown perfume from far away—from India.

What *was* that strange attraction India held, even for people who, like myself, knew little or nothing about it? How could obvious impostors calling themselves "swamis" or "faqirs" claim such immediate attention in hard-boiled America? Could there really be something in India that the West had, perhaps, forgotten or never even known, yet dimly, insistently felt? Was India, too, changing, stirring, debunking?

More and more it clamoured at the doors of my consciousness; India, that mysterious question mark on the Eastern horizon. What was the power of India?

Very well, since it was not to be resisted, I would go to India. I would go quite alone, and try to study India from the Indian point of view: stay long enough to get a real idea of the place; find out if there was anything in this God-business, perhaps. Meanwhile, one could write about it anyhow.

Only one friend really understood, the others seemed to think it a crazy idea. "You will go out there," said one of these cheerful people, "and I will stay at home and read all the books on the subject. By the time you come back, I will know more about India than you do."

"Tell me," said another darkly. "Are you going to speak the truth about India really?"

"As far as I know it," I replied.

"Well, it's quite safe, because no one will believe you anyway."

"The British will never allow you to see anything," predicted a third. "You will be lucky if you even get there."

This sort of thing went on until I became quite desperate. "How can you expect to understand anything about India, when all these officials and people who've spent their lives in the country, admit they know nothing of it?"

"But I'm not going to *try* to understand India," I would explain wearily. "Considering that I don't understand anything, not even myself, I don't expect to understand India. I'm going to *see* India. I don't know anything about it. I don't want to read any books about it. Any number of people, Government officials, explorers, scientists, all kinds, can write authoritative volumes on India. But who wants to read them? Probably they're all wrong, anyhow. It's time somebody went out and looked at India in a perfectly ordinary, human way, and tried to give a truthful idea of how it struck him. That's all. Goodbye."

To get the facilities I needed, meant going to London first. In this connection, I owe a debt of gratitude to various people: friends, friends' friends, and officials, who took endless trouble over helping me. I wanted to go and stay in Indian States? Nothing easier; invitations would be arranged for me. If I would go to Delhi and see So and So, I would find everything prepared. Had I a list of what I wanted to see? I had not. Perhaps a few suggestions? It seemed incredible to me, but then I didn't know India!

"White road, white moon . . ." It haunted me all the way down the Channel, through the Bay of Biscay, along the lovely, tawny coasts of Portugal and Spain. The ship paused at Gibraltar, and, still dreaming, I wandered about the Rock, into the Almeida gardens, where bougainvillea and heliotrope made February into spring, and over to Europa Point, whence, across the Straits, one could see Ceuta and the other Pillar of Hercules. In the Gulf of Lyons, as always rough and cold, one still heard it, faintly, across a pale green atmosphere of seasickness. Then we got to Marseilles where British India begins.

It begins in the form of lean, tanned men and bored, faded women, who come aboard from the waiting mail train: Indian Civil Service, Army, Indian Police, Public Works Department, Educational, most of them known by cryptic initials: I. C. S., P. W. D., and so on. The atmosphere of the P. & O. line is dreadfully official, so that one feels, being nobody, that one should apologise for being there. Types are clearly marked. That flat footed woman with untidy, badly-done hair and extra long skirts, is a missionary. Why does flat-footedness so often accompany the message of Christ to the heathen? That stout man with a dark red face, who dances like a camel suffering from bunions, is a boxwallah, a Calcutta merchant. That slightly overdressed woman with touched up hair and appraising eyes, who likes her cocktails stiff and her men young, is an army officer's wife. The Very Superior Person with a clever, academic face and bad manners, is something exceedingly high up in Delhi. He has no physique, but his reports and monographs and memoranda are simply wonderful, and he controls a good part of the destinies of 308 million of the inferior races. The somewhat shabbier man, with the kindly eyes and a store of curious information about India, says, however, that he is an ass. He, himself, is in the Police, and naturally comes into closer contact with the people, even though they are mostly criminals, which might affect his point of view.

There are young boys, just out of college, going to a variety of jobs, a few wealthy sun worshippers who will get off at Port Said and proceed to Cairo, and a few shadowy Indians, unheeded question marks in all this western affirmation.

There is a fatality about Port Said! All the people who have never been East before go ashore, rush up to Simon Arz, and buy *topis,* always the wrong kind of topi. A great deal besides sunstroke depends upon one's topi in India, where people are distinguished as much as anything by their dress and, above all, by their headgear. The wrong kind of topi may add one hundred per cent to one's expenses!

For many of these newcomers, Port Said is their first glimpse

of the East, and it is not attractive. Though it is hardly a den of iniquity nowadays, it lives still upon its past reputation for sinfulness. The book shops offer you banned books at five hundred per cent over published price. Various poverty-stricken individuals offer you post card views of Egypt with a surreptitious air, hoping you will buy them because you think they are obscene. Every shop presents you with sickening, amber cigarettes, about which there hangs, one gathers, a flavour of wickedness. True, the Arab population, when it is not earning its living with primitive conjuring tricks, smokes opium to an extent I have never seen paralleled. But it does that in the Arab quarter, and tourists do not recognise the hollowed cocoanut with a bamboo stem, which gives its local name to the vice, "smoking the cocoanut." Egyptian ladies, who are neither Egyptian nor ladies, float up and down the principal streets, gazing with eyes of invitation through their black *burkas*. The male tourist, feeling a sad dog, hastily looks the other way in case a Nubian slave should come up and bat him suddenly on the head. At the door of the oriental perfume shop, its stout Levantine proprietor murmurs ingratiatingly, "Nize Egyptian scent, Chrissmass Night! . . . amber paste . . . put in your coffee . . . make you man again. . . ." Both the Egyptian scent and the "Chrissmass Night" come from Holland and Germany in large bottles of synthetic essence. The amber paste is a bit of scented, dissoluble wax. The "Egyptian ladies" are imported from all the seaports of the world.

As soon as the ship leaves port, everything closes up and the inhabitants take a little well-deserved rest. But let another ship arrive, even at two in the morning, and everything, even Simon Arz, flashes into life. Up at the New Bar, that famous resort of sailors and tourists, the waiters leap to their feet, and, armed with napkins, rush into the street literally shooing the new arrivals in. Thin Sindhi Indians, who hold the major portion of Port Said's curio trade, stand before their shops inviting you in to buy elephants . . . shawls . . . pretty pyjamas very cheap . . . silks . . .

"Gosh," says the newcomer. "So this is the gorgeous East."

It isn't. It is what the gorgeous East imagines the West likes, and proceeds to supply. It is where "modern progress" has really taken hold of the East. And the result is a most deplorable commentary!

After the deathly cold of the Suez Canal and the Gulf, a cold which not even a distant glimpse of Jab-al-Musa, Mount Sinai, could dispel, the Red Sea is very comfortable. One watches first the African mountains, dark blue and red against a hard blue sky. Then the coast of Yaman, dusky gold, but just as mountainous and jagged, on the other side. There is Perim, the quarantine station where the Hajjis from India, pilgrims en route to Mekka, go through inspection and baths. It looks a ghastly place, and the Hajjis, especially the women, complain bitterly of their treatment there. Then Aden.

"Aden!" say the people who have been out before. "It's just a hot rock." The British have an extraordinary habit of picking up hot rocks nobody else wants, and making them into strategic key positions. But Aden is more than that. It must have been something before the British had it, for the inhabitants have a Solomon complex. They show you immense water tanks, hewn out of solid rock and smoothed by centuries; these, they say, Suleiman, who is Solomon, built. But ask them why, where, when—and there is no answer. Way off in the sand you can just see a tiny group of palms. That is Sheikh Osman's garden. But who was, or is, Sheikh Osman, and why he built himself a large walled garden, and a tomb, and a house nearby—nobody can, or will, tell you. A tiny, single track light railway brings in minute trucks filled with green fodder. But whence—how—— No information.

Suddenly I remembered something. All this was once the land of Saba, the country of Bilkis, Queen of Sheba. That's where Suleiman came in, so far from home. Somewhere in the village I was passing, a very black Abyssinian began beating a drum . . . tap . . . tap . . . tap, tap, tap . . . the familiar unfamiliarity of the rhythm caught me. "White road, white moon——"

By the time one reached Bombay, Europe and America were æons away. One stood, as it were, poised in space between two worlds, and the experience was disheartening!

Bewildered and rather frightened by multitudes of dark faces, by strange sounds, strange inflections, strange smells (was it my imagination that made me sniff a faint aroma of carrion hanging over the city?), I suddenly felt that I had done rather a reckless thing, coming out here by myself, knowing nobody, armed with nothing but a singularly useless phrase book. There would, of course, be English people one could meet, but how could one hope ever to know any of these others, Indians? Already, I realised an intangible barrier between two worlds in India itself, the European and the Indian. How to get across it? Meanwhile, there was a place, in fact two places, to which one might go. One was the Taj Mahal, the other the Majestic Hotel.

My room at the former was large, airy, chastely adorned by two monastic beds outlined with mosquito curtain frames. The tall windows were closely shuttered. I looked round nervously for snakes. Suddenly, from outside, a shrill piping rose upon the air, just two or three notes rising and falling in an odd cadence. Throwing open the shutters, I saw, down in the middle of the street, a man playing on a gourd flute, while a large cobra swayed in front of him. Motors swerved as they passed. Straight ahead the Bay spread out magnificently. On top of the low wall, above the water, perched a row of coolies, looking extremely like monkeys on a frieze. To the right was a squat, undersized looking arch, apparently not connected with anything in the vicinity, and much smaller than the hotel. This, it appeared, was the Gate of India, where I was later to see a Viceroy land, while guns thundered, flags waved, and scores of minor princes and chiefs waited to welcome him.

The man with the cobra produced a thin, unhappy, sort of large rat and offered to make the mongoose fight the cobra! I closed the shutters hastily and turned on a bath. Outside, the shrill notes rose and fell!

No one city in India resembles any other. And no one of them is, according to the Europeans who live there, really India at all. Finding "India" becomes a sort of crock-of-gold-hunt, where you go on and on, and each time you are told, "Not here. Not here. Somewhere else." Somewhere else is always a place the speaker has never seen, and toward the end of my first year, it was quite often a place from which I had just come. Bombay, however, is really rather a recent affair. All the guidebooks tell you that it is built on an island, a thing one would never notice, and that the Portuguese settled there first, it being waste land, and then presented it to the British. The ancient ports of India were such places as Porbandar, Cambay, Calicut, now comparatively very small. Bombay squeezed them all out, and now, in its turn, is feeling unhealthy. Perhaps because of its origin, it impresses one as indelibly eighteenth century. The impression remains even when you know it well. There is something about the names: Apollo Bunder, Malabar Hill, Fort, Queen's Road, which calls to mind nabobs, Little Henry and His Bearer, and all those funny old books filled with pictures showing the life of Europeans in India during those forgotten days before the Mutiny.

In many ways it seems not to have changed. Bribery and corruption are not permitted, and so the pagoda tree is not so freely shaken. Drinking is less, and the motor has replaced the *gharri* and the palanquin; but fights over precedence, and feuds between different branches of the Indian Services, still go on. Officials are instructed not to call the Indians "natives," but the Bombay Yacht Club still proudly announces that no "native," not even a maharaja, may cross its threshold even as a guest. Servants, of course, must be "natives."

Naturally, any club has a right to its own rules, but why it should be a matter of pride that the most ordinary, partially literate, European salesman may enter a club from which a prince of ancient lineage is excluded, requires explanation to the newcomer. The Indian explanation is that the Europeans must have some place where they can misbehave as much as they please without having to think about their prestige.

Though it is not immediately apparent, there is a distinct charm about Bombay. One feels it in the old houses, great barracks, which have belonged to Indian merchant princes in the days when trade was far more prosperous for them than now. Such places, intrinsically not beautiful, have an atmosphere which is lacking even in the Begam of Janjira's lovely house on Malabar Hill, with its consciously Eastern design and decoration. It was done by her brother-in-law, known usually as "Atiya Begam's husband," who has also done some of the work in the new India House in London, but it reminds one very much of what might be seen in New York if the Indian craze hit interior decorators.

Life in Bombay is eighteenth century. Nobody goes to office much before ten or eleven, because the banks don't open until then. The event of the year, apart from racing and tennis, is the Quadrangular Cricket Match, when Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, and Europeans (officially there seem to be no Christians in these things) each make up an eleven to play for a shield or some similar trophy. Equally regularly, every year, at the end of the Quadrangular week, the losing elevens declare that play is steadily getting dirtier, that the umpires are weak-kneed, that such cheating has never been seen, that the event ought to be stopped, and anyhow, they are not going to play in it ever again.

Possibly standing out all day in a blazing sun does this sort of thing to people.

Bombay is one of the great textile centres of India. It seems curious to remember that Europe got its first cottons from India, to be precise from Calicut. When the British came, spinning and weaving by hand was one of the finest of India's many fine arts and crafts. Even the famous shadow linen of Egypt was no better than the ring muslins of Dacca and Rajputana. But it became necessary to find a market for Lancashire's textile goods. A duty of sixty-seven per cent was put on Indian textiles and other persuasions used. By 1840 there was, to all intents and purposes, nothing left of this exquisite and flourishing craft. The men who had practised it for generations went back to add to the pressure on the land, just as striking mill hands do today.

Much as one dislikes Gandhi and his many insincerities, it would seem, possibly, partly owing to his influence that hand weaving and spinning have undergone something of a renascence, so that now in India there are at least three million people engaged in this ancient occupation, supplying about twenty-five per cent of the country's cotton requirements.

On the other hand, the Gandhi party, which includes the extremists who admire and follow Russia, have been instrumental in shaking Bombay to its financial foundations. Strike after strike, during the last three years, has completely wrecked trade, and brought great firms to the verge of bankruptcy. Unquestionably, economic war is a definite policy on the part of clever Swarajists, who have taken to heart Macaulay's famous remark that when India no longer paid the British, they would get out of the country. No single pronouncement of recent years has done more harm than Lord Birkenhead's affirmation and underlining of this thought.

But, aside from the strikes, and aside from proposals to remove the mills from Bombay, it is an expensive port for shipping, and some recent empire building experiments have added to its liabilities. There is Lord Lloyd's Back Bay Land Reclamation Scheme, for instance. So far it has resulted in a lot of work, taking land from one place and dumping it on another, a fine new sea wall where nobody goes, a new race course which is really impressive, and a number of *chawls,* model workmen's dwellings, like exaggerated dog kennels built of brick and stone. To crowd an entire Indian family into one of these, through hot and cold weather and especially just after the rains, would seem to be inviting every disease. The Indian working man shows his good sense by refusing to tenant them, and preferring his nice hut of mud or straw, which annually collapses, and thus, willy nilly, gets a spring cleaning.

Lord Lloyd, who appears not to have been the most popular Governor Bombay ever had, loved big schemes, such as the Sukkur Barrage, up in Sind. "And one thing about being Governor is that one doesn't have to pay for them," says Bombay

bitterly, thinking of her 1930 budget, in which nation-building departments had to be cut to the bone for lack of money.

It was not until I reached the Caves of Elephanta that it came to me, very faintly, again. Everybody goes to the Caves of Elephanta; they are almost the only sights, beyond scenery, that Bombay possesses. Sculpturally, the interior has a queer suggestion of Egypt; though it is all ruined. Ruined and dust. A guide, Eurasian, twittered at my elbow, "Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Hindu holy trinity . . . this lady Shiva god's wife . . . this holy trinity . . . this lingam stone . . ." He knew nothing else; nor did my kind English companion. There was something terrible in the desertion of the place, haunted by a million tourists. Outside, there was a straw shed, and some rough benches where a few Indian sight-seers, men and women, sat quietly. Near by a coppersmith bird began to repeat his beautiful notes, like a small gong ringing, ringing. Coolies waited patiently to carry one down hundreds of steps in a swaying chair. I looked around hopefully for some of those religious obscenities I had heard so much about. There weren't any. Even the lingam stone was about as much, or as little, phallic as the Washington Memorial.

Yet, in spite of the forlornness which emanates from any place where once men have felt deeply, and that now is half forgotten, there was, at Elephanta, something one missed in Bombay. A sense of being in a different world; an elusive, exciting sense of standing on a threshold. It touched me lightly, and vanished.

Outside, the waters of the Bay glittered blindingly.

CHAPTER TWO

LOOT OF ASIA

"WHO holds Delhi, holds India!" That fact, which has become a proverb, accounts for nearly all Delhi's history. The map explains it. Until the coming of the Europeans, India was always invaded from the North. The best position in which to await the invaders and give them battle was in the broad plain just above Delhi. To reach it the enemy had to cross the Five Rivers which give Punjab its name, and, moreover, he had to take a route which debouched on to the plain through a comparatively straitened neck of land, because the Himalayas on his left and the desert on his right made anything else impossible. Once he had Delhi, the wide fertile lands of Southern India lay helpless before him.

Because the battlefield lay so close outside the walls, Delhi nearly always got sacked by the conqueror, who then built himself a new city, to be sacked in its turn. Thus, spread over something like twenty miles or so along the banks of the Jamna, are the ruins of eleven or twelve great cities. The worst sacking of all was done by Timor, Tamburlane the Great, and he built nothing. He just took his loot and left.

Delhi, then, has always been the heart of India, and India is the richest, the most magical country in Asia. Rich not only in gold and jewels, but in cunning craftsmen and in superbly fertile lands. Just as India's knowledge has always attracted the spiritual seeker, so its wealth and its beauty have attracted the brutal and the avaricious. Concentrated in India, and above all, in Delhi, has been the supreme essence of Asiatic luxury and splendour. Small wonder, then, that the ambition of invader after

invader has been to loot Delhi. What is amazing is that nearly all stayed to build another city, even more marvellous than the one destroyed.

In deference to another proverb which says that, "He who sits at Delhi eventually loses India," the British, after the Mutiny, made their capital in Calcutta. Then an historically-minded Viceroy decided to remove to Delhi. There were, of course, other reasons alleged; moral effect, lack of space in Calcutta, climate, etc., but the real one was history. But, though the Moghals ruled from Delhi for something like five centuries, India immediately decided that this move marked the beginning of the end as far as the British were concerned. And such things are very important in the East.

Amusingly enough, like every other conqueror the British have built themselves a new city, which they call "Imperial Delhi," otherwise known as "New Delhi." It straggles southwards for something like eleven miles, and, from the town planning and architectural point of view, it is dreadful. No worse mess could possibly be imagined.

The town planner seems to have been to Washington, and decided that circles were a good idea. So he put in circles. But the reason for circles apparently escaped him, and instead of a spoke effect of roads and avenues, which makes direction finding so easy in Washington, his roads wander casually up and down and round about. Consequently, unless the stranger sends a scouting party in advance, he is likely to be lost for hours trying to find some particular house.

Moreover, two architects were engaged, one for the Secretariat and the new city, the other for Viceregal House; and it is said they quarrelled! The consequence of their ill feeling is marked for ever on New Delhi. For instance, there is a great main road known as Kingsway. The Viceroy and similar important people, are supposed to proceed in state from old Delhi right down this road to Viceregal House, whose marble and gold portals they are scheduled to see from afar glittering in the sun. One does see it from afar, but, as one approaches, a rise in the ground slowly but surely covers it. All that remains visible are

the two Secretariat buildings flanking it. This may be, as the rest of New Delhi is said to be, symbolical, but if so the symbolism is unfortunate.

At the time the whole thing was planned, no one, apparently, dreamed of such a thing as a Legislative Assembly. When it came into being, rules of precedence made it impossible that the building should not be on a level, at least, with the Secretariat. Nor would it be convenient to place it too far away. Eventually it was put on the same rise of ground, a little to westward, obviously forming no part of the original plan. And, while the adjacent buildings are all designed in railway-Saracenic, the Assembly building is a circular, many pillared, pseudo-Greek affair of two stories, which looks exactly like an early Victorian wedding cake minus its top layers.

It is said that on beholding the interior of her new home, the Vicereine wept. It is not surprising. Any woman would weep, discovering her bathroom separated from her boudoir by about a quarter of a mile. Nor would it calm her, on looking out of the window, to find the missing tops of the Legislative Assembly wedding cake forming the Viceregal Bodyguard Lines.

Clemenceau, when he visited India, is reported to have said that New Delhi would, at any rate, make good ruins. Personally I doubt if it would make ruins at all, because the officials' new houses are so shoddy that it is a question whether they would, untended last long enough for such purposes.

"But they will last our time," remarked a high official, "After all, we are getting out of India."

"Getting out of. . .?

"Of course, we can't go on holding India indefinitely, against her will. It's our policy now to turn it over gradually. We'll all leave, eventually, and come back as highly salaried experts. It'll be a much better arrangement as far as we poor, underpaid men are concerned."

Considering that I had come to India filled with ideas about the absolute necessity of British rule there, the "sacred trust," etc., etc., this sort of conversation was rather surprising.

"Once you start on a policy of constitutionalism, reforms, and

all that," another spoke, "you can't retreat. You must go forward. So we have to go on giving more and more power to the Indians until they can run the whole show themselves."

Above all, official Delhi is calm. There is an atmosphere of leisurely serenity about it, only broken when the semi-annual house hunting takes place. For nobody keeps a house there above six months or so. Each time the Government moves to Simla, houses in Simla have to be assigned. When it moves down to Delhi, bungalows are again distributed. And as even bungalows in India are allotted according to precedence, there is much intriguing and heart burning every October and April.

Relations between British and Indians are, on the whole, more friendly in Delhi than elsewhere. "That's because we are getting the Parliamentary atmosphere into the Legislative Assembly," said another official. "You see, though it *is* rather a gas house at present, it helps to train the Indian politician for constitutional government. He voices his grievances, and that's useful all round. And it can't do so very much harm."

"It is," stated an Indian politician bitterly, "a complete farce. The atmosphere of insincerity is crushing. We know we can't do anything except call the Government names and frighten it as much as possible. We have very little power, and less responsibility. That's demoralizing."

"How much does So and So get for putting questions to the Government?" asked another Indian politician.

The first one named a figure. "He oughtn't to take so little," he said thoughtfully, "it's bad for our prestige."

"Really and truly," the British official said, happily, "they don't want us to go. They make an awful fuss, but that's just to get something—jobs for instance. They know the value of the British Army, and they know perfectly well that without it India wouldn't last a day in peace."

"Naturally," the Indian politician pointed out, "we don't want the British to clear out bag and baggage and leave us defenceless! We're not utterly mad yet. But we do want to see something done toward getting our own defence forces ready to take over. We have a good nucleus of Indian regiments, but

we've no officers, no means of training them. A maximum of fifteen can go to Sandhurst annually, but, at that rate, it's going to take five hundred more years to get an Indian army. The Skeen report, which lays down a scheme for training our officers and Indianizing our forces, has been passed unanimously, but will the Government act upon it? Not unless we force them to it."

"The fact is," an Indian moderate spoke bitterly, "only extremists get anything in this country. You have to kick and scream and yell and make the Government think you're a very dangerous person, and then they'll give you something to keep you quiet. We moderates, who are really loyal to the British, are calmly neglected. They know we won't do anything to hamper them."

"They're good fellows at bottom," said another British official, "but children you know. Just children. . . ."

In this atmosphere of slightly condescending kindness on the one hand, and distrust and resentment on the other, political life in Delhi is carried on. Until both points of view are grasped, there is no sense to be made out of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly.

It is very difficult, in any case, to compare the Legislative Assembly at Delhi with any other Parliamentary body, because, as compared with others, its members have little or no immediate responsibility to the people. The Government benches are in no sense elective. They are composed of certain members of the Government, ex-officio, plus a certain number of members nominated by the Government as representatives of various classes or interests. Besides these, there is a small European group, elected from the various European Associations of the principal big cities. The remainder of the Assembly is drawn from various constituencies, by election, but—and it is a rather big but—the franchise is only extended to seven and a half million out of a population of roughly three hundred and eight million people. Moreover, out of this again, a certain number of seats are reserved for Hindus, a certain number for Musalmans. This is what is known as "communal representation."

Obviously, the Government can never be turned out by the Opposition. Obviously, also, the Opposition can never receive the salutary training of direct responsibility. Eventually they are elected on a purely oppositional basis; that is, their popularity comes to depend upon the vigour and picturesqueness of the language they can apply to Government. If they can manage to get gaoled, they are, politically speaking, made for life. Hence, it should not be surprising if a distinct unreality pervades the sessions of the Assembly, at least as long as these conditions continue.

Bribery and corruption are, unquestionably not less rife than elsewhere in the world. The Indian mind is very realistic, and sees no reason for not admitting what exists. Nor does it perceive any fundamental difference between a cash bribe, and bribery by means of good jobs; or perhaps a decoration or so; or even some social attraction. In the British mind, apparently, a distinction does exist, and this again is a source of misunderstanding. The Indian M.L.A. constantly accuses Government members of hypocrisy, double dealing, and general rottenness, and, though it probably helps a great deal to know that such accusations are mere words having no effect upon one's position, nevertheless, at times, Government members are honestly hurt by what they consider Indian ingratitude.

Frivolous as the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly may often appear to the observer, one or two disturbing reflections arise in connection with the scene.

All these years of "training for constitutional self-government," are they not, actually, training in political insincerity, intrigue, and recklessness? Can habits thus formed and traditions set up, both in the Assembly and in the constituencies, really be swept away by the mere grant of Dominion Status?

"Oh, well, anyhow, the Indian is insincere," says the British official lightly. But is that sufficient reason for cultivating insincerity?

"But these men don't represent India," says a more thoughtful man. True, they are not always the best India has to give. But while they are in the Assembly, they must be treated as if

they did represent India. And meanwhile they build their political machines, and learn all the devious arts of demagoguery, which will give them an immense advantage as compared with the unpractised candidate and the unpractised elector.

Moreover, in time, this atmosphere of insincerity, like a poisonous gas, pervades everything in Delhi. One cannot help feeling that, with few exceptions, the officials do not really believe in the system under which they must work. That is perfectly natural. Permanent officials in India are necessarily bureaucrats, cut off by the circumstances of their life from any knowledge of modern world tendencies. It is somewhat difficult for them to imagine that such tendencies may affect the population of India. Chosen as experts in their special work, they have the expert's narrownesses, and the expert's contempt for the outsider, in this case the Home Government.

As in all bureaucracies, inter-departmental intrigue is rife, and to that is now added what might be called political expediencies. The best bureaucrats, moreover, should have no imagination, but a great regard for documentation and statistics. And, life among the Europeans in India being what it is, the personal element counts very heavily indeed. It matters a great deal, in Delhi and in Delhi appointments, whose cousin you are and who your uncle is.

Not that nepotism is the ruling factor. A man may be made Political Secretary because he has performed an unpopular task, and, his Province becoming too hot to hold him politically, some place has to be found for him. Or he may be given the appointment because he really is the best man available, understanding Indian States and trusted by the Princes. Both are possible.

Another man may be a brilliant Finance member, providing all sorts of budget surpluses during his comet-like progress, and, retiring, leave his more solid successor the unhappy task of paying for the surpluses without any hope of reputation.

A third may be appointed in some other position of importance because he is an academic delight when it comes to paper work, and a very good departmental politician; but he may have no forcefulness at all and may antagonise every Indian in sight.

An Indian may be given a big job because of his genuine ability, or because the time has come when some Hindu or some Musalman, as the case may be, has to have a turn in a job.

Such things make comprehension of the Government of India just a little difficult for the outsider. Only one point stands out clearly: reputations may be genuinely earned; quite as often they may not be deserved.

A great deal hinges on the personality of the Viceroy. A tradition seems to exist in the Home Government whereby one strong man does not succeed another. The usual procedure, which applies even to Provincial Governors, is to alternate; strong and weak, weak and strong. Possibly it is a legacy of the days when a strong man might have made himself an independent ruler. Generally speaking, the strong Viceroy is not so very popular with his permanent officials, and the weak Viceroy is not much beloved by the Indians. The late Lord Curzon was an exception. His tragedy was that nobody loved him because his manners were so appalling!

Among Europeans, social life in Delhi is, naturally, extremely official. Viceregal House sets the pace.

On arriving in the city, you proceed, first of all, to put your name down in the Viceregal Book, together with your rank, your address, and date of arrival and departure. Following this, you go through the same performance with regard to the Commander in Chief and the Commissioner. Taking a deep breath, you leave cards on everybody within sight or the bounds of imagination. The British genius for practical compromise has now given Delhi an organization known as the Calling League; on joining this, at the cost of a few rupees, your name is put on its lists and calls are considered made. In due course everybody except the Viceroy calls on you.

According to your position, the Viceregal Aide de Camp is commanded by Their Excellencies to invite you to dinner, lunch, or a garden party. The garden party is the least terrible, because everyone who is not an actual outcast is invited, and, this being so, only a chosen few actually meet Their Excellencies. It is, therefore, possible to stay away without the fact being noticed.

Formal meals, at which one stands round waiting for Their Excellencies to arrive and circulate from one to another saying "How do you do?"; goes in according to an invariable order of precedence; and, following the meal, is shunted about by hard-working Aides de Camp for the statutory five minutes with His or Her Excellency, so much time with some one else, and so much time with another person, are more trying.

One goes through them sustained by much the same feelings as supported the Christian martyrs in Roman arenas. The ordeal is tiresome, but think of the future halo. There is also this consolation, that in all probability the lions, in this case Their Excellencies, like it as little as anyone else.

Snobbishness, which is rampant in India, is less prevalent in Delhi, however, than elsewhere, and this lends social life much greater ease and charm, in spite of officialdom. Nevertheless, though existence in Delhi provides much that is delightful and more, to the outsider, that is sheer comedy, it would be short-sighted to ignore the explosive elements beneath the surface. For below the many amenities of life there, its dinners, its dances, its amateur art shows, its Hunt Club, its annual Horse Show, there is a strange suggestion of the sinister.

Perhaps this may be due to the ever present reminders of the Mutiny. No one can escape the Mutiny in Delhi. There on the Ridge stands the memorial to those who died in the siege; curiously enough there are more Indian names than European. The walls of Delhi remain, battered, much as they were on the day the British swept into the city. In the beautiful old Fort, which was restored by Lord Curzon, you can see former imperial rooms, still whitewashed and smoke stained by the kitchen fires of the British troops. Daryagunj, Kashmir Gate, and such places are always pointed out to the visitor with accompanying tales of massacre and horror.

And the Indians? Have they forgotten?

Something over two decades ago, there was a Coronation Durbar held in Delhi. Walking away from it, two Indian gentlemen discussed the proceedings with admiration. Near to them walked an old, old Hindu, weeping silently. Finally, one of the

At Home at the Chelmsford Club, Delhi.
British and Indian Legislators and Their Wives Forgather Socially.

two, who were Muslims, turned and asked the aged Hindu the reason for his grief. "Ah, *saheb,*" he replied, "this Durbar was beautiful; but you should have seen the Durbars our Emperor gave!"

"Our Emperor" was Badshah, last of the Moghals.

It would be quite wrong to imagine that anyone in Delhi, or elsewhere in India, wishes to restore the Moghals to their throne. For one thing, there are, to all intents and purposes, no Moghals left to restore. Indians will tell you that the British hunted the Moghal heirs to the ends of India and killed every one they could lay their hands on, beginning with the immediate massacre of Badshah's sons by Hodson of Hodson's Horse. A few survived, and the old, half-blind Emperor was given a small pension. But their memory lives, especially among the Musalmans, who still sing Badshah's beautiful and pathetic poem bidding goodbye to Delhi and his Empire.

In those days, Delhi must have been wicked and wonderful, as all great capitals are. Even now, it is famous for its dancing girls, musicians, jewellers, perfumers, embroiderers, and miniature painters. It still continues an ancient rivalry with Lucknow in the matter of speaking pure and beautiful Urdu, in its literary form, a very elaborate, difficult language. Along the Chandni Chauk, that world-known thoroughfare, East, West, North, and South, meet and pass in an ever shifting pageant of races and types. But it is in its network of narrow, devious *galis* (side streets) that Delhi greets you full-flavoured.

To wander down to the perfumer's quarter and spend a few hours there, sitting on the edge of an open-fronted shop, your feet dangling over an open drain, is a fascinating occupation. Old Abdul Gnani, smiling amiably behind his whiskers, squats near by. Bottle after bottle he brings out: rose, jasmine, narcissus, *khas* (a very pungent scent, that), sandal, musk, amber, henna; strong, pervasive Eastern oils. One by one he wraps a scrap of cotton wool round the end of a long straw, dips it into the perfume, and offers it to you. One by one you sniff, deciding or rejecting, and, in between, discuss the questions of the day or some point of religious philosophy.

The perfectly Western mind is apt to be preoccupied by the open drain. But smells do no harm, and the strong sun is an excellent disinfectant. Meanwhile, a little further down, there is a silversmith beating out a pair of anklets, while a villager sits mistrustfully watching lest he steal any of the silver. A line of minute donkeys, laden with bricks, straggles past, amid shouts from every one and exhortations to get out of the way.

Or, down another *gali,* you find a shop where old Kashmir shawls and embroidered coats may be had, at a price. But, also, torn scraps of shawls which, whole, would have been priceless, and whose remnants make delightful handbags.

Only by wandering thus, unattended and casual, making friends here and there, can you begin to realize the underground influences which shape Indian life. There, near the Jamma Masjid (the Great Mosque) tucked away in a corner, is the Indraprastha Hindu Girls' School, whose existence is romance.

An elderly, white-haired woman founded it and runs it. She is a Theosophist, a Miss Gemeiner. Cold weather, hot weather, rains, she stays in that old house, all by herself. "My niece used to be with me, but she died . . . the hot weather . . . fever. . ." she tells you. And day in, day out, she and a small staff of Indian teachers, provide Indian education for Hindu girls of good caste. Year in and year out, they come and they go, in a closed bus since they are nearly all pardah, until the day they get married, or sometimes after. A few, from outside Delhi board in the school.

The fees are very low, and Miss Gemeiner, herself, lives like an ascetic. She is not a missionary. She has no axe to grind. Her only thought is to give something to India. And in all probability she will die at her post. But what an influence a woman like that must have upon hundreds of young lives, and, through them, upon their surroundings!

Without detracting in the least from the value of the work done, one can more or less understand the life of great hospitals and institutions, such as Lady Hardinge Hospital. There, though life is not without strain and hardship, there is company, and some sort of comfort. But to live alone, in the middle of the

bazaar, with the courtesans' quarter edging up to your back door —What, I asked myself, was the power that made this possible?

Loafing about, bored to tears, at various official functions, Viceregal garden parties, and what not, one wondered, talking idly to various imposing people, just how much, how intimately, they affected the lives of the people living so near them. What did they know at first hand? What did it, any of it, India itself, really mean to them outside of their jobs as patriotic servants of Empire?

What, to them, was the lesson of all those ruined cities spread out over the Jamna plain? At night, from my room in Maiden's Hotel, or motoring out to watch the moon rise from the Ridge, I could hear the jackals bursting into a sudden chorus of mad laughter, as, roaming about amid the ruins they struck upon some prey, a bit of carrion or a smaller animal. There is nothing so wild and melancholy as the jackal pack giving cry through the darkness. Thickly gathered below, strung out and widely spaced further off, the lights of old and new Delhi twinkled. Old Delhi, that had seen so much; New Delhi, that had yet to see!

There, at the far end of the City, stood the Fort, encircled by high red walls. Out on the plain were other forts, whose ruined walls once stood as high.

Within the Fort were gardens, laid out by the Moghal Emperors, whose taste has never been surpassed. Jewelled pavilions and rooms of marble tracery, luxurious baths, that gem of Islamic architecture which, to my mind, is more lovely than the Taj Mahal, and was once the praying place of Empresses; the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). There, in that wonderful palace, the Koh-i-Nur was cut. There Italian, French, and English artists were summoned by the Emperor to add beauties to beauty. There power, mind, luxury displayed itself as nowhere else in the world at that time. And now?

Scars in the lovely walls, whence the jewels have been stolen. A few British soldiers quartered somewhere in the Fort. A string of weary tourists passing through day by day, knowing little, and caring less. And, on the other side, where the Emperors showed themselves in a throne room set on the walls,

Jamna flowing by; in cold weather, a mere trickle of water between shifting beds of sand; about the time of the rains, a grey, ominous flood stretching from bank to bank, and overflowing the neighbouring fields, here and there a stray, drowned buffalo, carried swiftly down. In those old days, when Delhi fell, how many corpses went down on the flood, how red the waters ran!

But still, near the water's edge, saddhus sat in prayer or meditation. Still, on religious days, long lines of Hindus went to and from the river to bathe and carry back brass *lotas* (water vessels) filled with river water. And still, on other days, thousands upon thousands of Muslims crowded the Jamma Masjid, which holds twelve thousand, and overflowed thickly down the steps and into the surrounding spaces.

I wondered, why was Delhi such a fatal place? Was the answer implicit, perhaps, in the Fort? Behind those great walls, the last Emperor and his court lived in a world of their own, hearing nothing, knowing nothing, of what happened outside. Writing beautiful poetry, hearing exquisite music whose ultra refinement is almost beyond description, their most serious occupation questions of court intrigue, realities slowly but surely slipped out of their sight. What did the British mean to them, providing that their representatives deferred to this shadow of power? When the news of the Mutiny first clanged through the Palace, and the old Emperor, writing desperately to the British for assistance ere the mutineers reached Delhi, got no answer —what did he know of British difficulties, or British plans? Only when the rebellious sepoys, terrified already by fear of their own acts, burst into his presence and, throwing their paggaris and caps at his feet shouted, "Justice! Justice! You are our Emperor. You must lead us now against the enemy, or we shall kill you also." Only then Badshah must have realized the doom that confronted him and all his line.

That, perhaps, is the fatality of Delhi. Glamorous, insinuating, she lulls her conquerors. They forget the outer world, lose all contact with the people, and slowly, slowly, reality is replaced by illusion—illusion of power, illusion of strength, illusion of justice—until it is too late!

The sun sinks redly behind the city. Delicately black against the glowing sky, the minarets of Jamma Masjid soar upwards, pointing.

CHAPTER THREE

LIGHTNING IN THE NORTH

BEFORE you, bleak, stony hills, over which lower dark clouds. Behind you, a mist of blue and gold, where the fertile Punjab plains lie bathed in sunshine. Separating the two, the wide Indus races from the Himalayas to the sea.

Just below Attock Fort, you can still see the brick and stone pillars of the old Moghal Bridge. The new steel one, built by the British, crosses the river higher up. There, too, the Grand Trunk Road, first laid down by the Moghals, straight as an arrow from Calcutta, turns and thrusts forward to Peshawar. There, turning again, it becomes the old caravan route, up through the Khyber Pass, through Afghanistan, through Bokhara, into Central Asia.

"This," said a man, "is the front door to India, through which former invaders always smashed their way. It is still, today, the major factor in the problem of self government for India."

"Why?" I asked, perhaps naïvely.

"Because the Frontier must be held. Have you tried to estimate the number of troops we have here, at Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, in the Pass, Chitral, Dera Ismail Khan?"

"You make me dizzy," I interrupted.

"Or why," he continued, "there are army command headquarters at Rawalpindi and Quetta?"

"And . . .?" I said.

"And troops mean supplies, munitions, transport, lines of communication. Because we came in at the back door, by sea. That means long lines of communication, right across India to

the ports. We have got to be sure of those lines. Can we be sure that they will be efficiently maintained if we hand over the government of India to Indians. . . ."

"Your idea dawns on me," I said; "You mean that conditions here are too acute to permit of the slightest risk. From where then, do you expect invasion?"

"First," said my friend, "there are the tribes, watching for any sign of weakness; then Afghanistan; and behind Afghanistan, Russia."

"Do you really believe in the Russian bugbear?" I asked.

"Why not?" he replied. "If you can prove to me that Russian foreign policy, Russian dreams of Asiatic Empire, have in any way changed since the fall of the Romanoffs. . . . Do you know anything about the last Afghan War in 1919–20?"

"Nothing," I put in, cheerfully.

"Well, that war was partly an accident, at least, on Amanullah's part. He understood there was to be a revolution in India, starting with the Punjab. There very nearly was. The news of its suppression didn't reach Kabul soon enough to enable Amanullah to countermand the order sending his troops down to the Frontier—and over—with a view to helping on the revolution. We took that as an unfriendly act."

Was that lightning—or gun flashes—darting through the heavy clouds over there? I gazed in silence. Then, "How do you keep the tribes quiet now?" I asked.

"Oh, well, you'll see. We have a system," answered my friend. "You had better hurry now, because if you don't reach Peshawar before dark you may have difficulty in passing the sentries. Anyhow, the roads are dangerous after dusk."

Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu—all along this part of the Frontier, Europeans live behind barbed wire, with big searchlights placed at intervals playing all night over the surrounding country. All night, too, infantry and cavalry patrols watch the wire for fear of sudden raids. The gates are shut at lighting up time, when everyone is expected to be behind the wire.

Before the war this was not so. The wire is a result of the last kidnapping, that of Miss Ellis, which was a front page story

at the time. Prior to that, there had been some four or five other kidnappings, whose victims had not always been quite as lucky as Miss Ellis.

"War upon women is not strictly ethical among the frontier tribes, it means, for one thing, long drawn out blood feuds and heavy blood fines. But. . . ."

During the World War, both sides tried to propagandize the tribes with the usual series of half truths, lies, and appeals to primitive hatred which worked so well in the West. Unfortunately there was a slight misunderstanding of the simpler Eastern psychology. Having heard all about German atrocities and so forth, the Pathan returned to his home and said, "Brothers, we have made a great mistake. It seems that after all these sahebs are not as civilized as we are. Themselves, they tell us, they make war upon women and children. *Wallah,* I tell you, they are savages."

For it must be remembered that, to the average Pathan or Afridi, German or English is much the same. They both come from Velaiti. If not quite the same, at least, brothers.

Following this demoralizing suggestion, came an unfortunate incident involving a pair of drunken Tommies and an Afridi girl. This meant a blood feud, and led to the first kidnapping, by way of revenge. In fear and trembling, the tribes watched for condign and terrible punishment.

Politically, it was not, at the moment, very convenient to engage in a small military expedition, which, in England, might have been magnified into a war. Nor were the people concerned socially prominent. Whatever was done in the way of punishment seems not to have impressed the tribes deeply enough, or made them feel that the British valued the honour of their women as highly as they had imagined. They did it again. And again and again. Until, public attention being aroused by the case of Miss Ellis, something serious had to be done. The kidnappers' dwellings were razed to the ground, and European cantonments turned into small forts.

As in other parts of India, the Europeans live well outside

of the city proper, in a sort of suburb all their own. Riots occur frequently, and it is safer thus. In Peshawar, the police go on duty with rifles and bayonets.

Little touches like this make Peshawar a really romantic city. Like old Samarkand, it is set amid fruit gardens, peach, apple, cherry, pear, which, incidentally, make perfect lying up places for raiders. Its ochre coloured walls, however, are high and thick. Inside, straight down from the Kabuli Gate, runs the Kissi Kahana, one of the most famous gossip centres of Asia. Kissi Kahana means literally, "whose saying" or "some person's saying."

All the way down the Kissi Kahana and everywhere through the city, you see little open-fronted shops, at the back of which the samovar—a perfectly good Russian samovar—boils night and day. On the narrow, wooden benches which take up part of the pavement, men from all over Central Asia sit and drink milkless, green tea, exchanging the stories which give the street its name. The cups they drink from are made in Russia.

For a very small sum, something like three or four dollars American, one used to be able to buy charming tea or coffee sets of the traditional Russian-blue or cherry-red, made in the imperial factories at Moscow. Today, you can only get a much inferior quality, with the Soviet star and sickle substituted for the delightful little picture of flowers on the side of the cup—and sometimes even these are Japanese imitations!

Once upon a time, too, you could buy *sazanis,* bed covers, marvellously embroidered by hand, *lungis* (shawl like lengths) of supple iridescent silk with varicoloured fringes, beautifully patterned rugs, all from Bokhara, for equally ridiculous sums. No more now! Imitations made in Meshed cost you three or four hundred per cent as much. There is no one left in Bokhara, after the Russian massacres, to carry on these lovely arts. In Kabul bazaar, there is a carpet seller who was once the Amir of Bokhara!

The Soviet torch of freedom in Central Asia has brought ruin to many great Peshawari merchant families. Those tall,

sparsely windowed houses you see up side streets are very deceptive. They may be swarming rabbit warrens, every room of which contains a family. Or they may be palaces.

Up one of the side streets I went to visit Karim Baksh (this is not his real name), head of a merchant family. The heavy, barred door opened into an archway, through which one reached a cool inner courtyard, paved with brick and set about with palms and flowers. In the middle a fountain tinkled. Round about ran intricately carved galleries, on to which gave great rooms with carved and decorated ceilings, and floors spread with gorgeous rugs. It seemed a palatial house. "But you must come to the zenana," said Karim Baksh (the zenana is the women's apartments), and, taking me through a door on the left, led me into another courtyard, as large as the first, with another entire house around it.

"There is, you see," he pointed out, "a closed bridge over the street to my son's house. But I must show you the *tai khana.*" The *tai khana* turned out to be a series of very high, vaulted rooms underground, with narrow window space near the ceiling to give air. As I entered I shivered. Outside the temperature was well over one hundred in the shade, but down here it was like a refrigerator. "This is where we keep cool during the summer heats," my host told me. "Before the days of electric punkahs our houses were always built like this."

"Where do you get your trade?" I asked him later.

"It used to be between India and Central Asia," Karim Baksh said. "But now . . . I had an even bigger house in Bokhara. It was worth more than ten lakhs (a lakh is a hundred thousand rupees), but the Russians confiscated it and all my fortune there."

"But you are a British subject?"

"Yes. That is why I cannot go to Bokhara. They do not allow British subjects to trade there."

"But surely there did exist a trade agreement, at least for some time, between England and Russia?"

"Maybe, but that never affected us. That may be very nice for British people who like to go to Moscow, to sell things to the Soviet Government. But it doesn't mean anything when the

Soviet Government finds it more profitable to take away trade from British subjects." He paused.

"I am almost ruined," he said. "But in two years, these two years, thirty big merchants have been altogether ruined in Peshawar. The old houses are going. Now there are many Armenian traders coming in, bringing cheap imitation rugs, silks, and so on, from Persia."

In Peshawar you suddenly realize that Russia is Asiatic, not European. The colouring is so exactly that of Russian art, the scenes remind you of those in *Tsar Fyodor,* as staged by the Moscow Art Theatre. You buy wooden bowls in which the Frontier housewife keeps her cereals and sugar, all painted and lacquered like the objects made by Russian refugees in Berlin, except that they are less refined, more primitive and vigorous.

Down in the main square, near what is locally known as the Astink statue (Lord Hastings' statue) a small crowd gathers round a story teller. He sits on the ground, talking in high, whining Pashtu, and swaying as the tale gathers momentum and he breaks into verse. Every now and then he emphasizes his point by driving a dagger into the ground before him. At his side a pupil, squatting on his heels, adds admiring ejaculations, or exclaims in horror. "Wah!" answers the crowd, swaying a little in sympathy.

It is a wonderful crowd. Here is a hawk-nosed Orakzai, in loose trousers (they measure yards round the waist and are all gathered on a net pyjama string), his shirt reaching his knees, the end of his fringed *paggari* arranged over one ear; there, a caravan driver from somewhere beyond Kabul, whose *paggari* is tied round a leather skull cap, the crown of which is embroidered in heavy silver and coral beads; a Mohmand wearing a perfectly mediæval waistcoat of olive green embroidered in black braid, with sleeves to the elbow; a Persian in a tall cap of astrakhan. They sway and shout applause and throw money as the story-teller concludes, "And three kinds of men Allah sends to hell; the miser who hoards up his wealth so that his son, inheriting, becomes a spendthrift wastrel, deserving the wrath of God; the husband who allows his wife to deceive him with another; and

the Jews, because they crucify their prophets." Swish, the dagger goes into the ground. "Wah, wah!" shouts the audience, throwing small coins.

It smells very much of onions, this crowd. There are onion stalks scattered all over the ground, the vegetable market being just round the corner. Onions and *"hing"* (assafœtida) are two of Peshawar's characteristic odours, because the North loves *hing* in its food and onions. "If I had two rupees a day for life," goes a Central Asian saying, "I would spend both of them on onions." They are considered, throughout the East, to be a strong aphrodisiac.

Coming in through the Kabul Gate, keeping rather close to the houses, and soon turning off to the left of the Kissi Kahana, is an unhappy little procession, two or three rough men and half a dozen fair, good-looking girls. They are Kashmiris, slaves, bought for the courtesans' bazaar. When there is hunger in Kashmir, such girls are sold—not openly, because it is forbidden —but sold nevertheless. You can see them in the courtesans' bazaar, sitting in those dingy houses whose lower rooms are shut off from the street only by half-doors, so that what is for sale can be viewed. Only the lowest of the low, ragged caravan hangers-on frequent them. The genuine dancing girl, the hereditary courtesan for which Peshawar is famous, is quite a different person.

There is a wedding somewhere out Michni way, and up the road comes a third type of dancing girl—loose hair cut like a Renaissance page to just above the shoulders, and bound above the brows by a golden fillet, face carefully powdered and made up, and eyes lengthened with *surma* (antimony), long, jewelled hands, and feet tinted with henna—it is not a girl, it is a boy! His dress is of fine muslin or silk, high waisted and falling in full pleats to his ankles, so that as he whirls and turns, with tiny short steps and hands outspread, it lifts and spreads like the petals of a flower. Peshawar is famous for these, too!

It is one of those cities whose fascination never dims. The bird bazaar, filled with little net cages where fighting quails are

sold—you see young men and boys walking about exercising their pet quails on their hands. The Afridi bazaar, where you buy cloths curiously decorated, sometimes in classical Greek patterns, with wax paint; the Hindu quarter at night, when the great gates are shut and you slip in through a small portal and wander up through narrow wriggling streets, with splashes of light here and there from a *bannia's* lamp, and the smells of India round you again. The Hindu quarter is the ghetto of Peshawar, liable to be looted and burned in excitable moments.

But most of all the sunset, when you go up to what was once a palace and a keep, and, climbing on the gate tower, stand and watch the loosing of the pigeons. All Peshawar keeps carrier pigeons, and at this hour they are let out, rising in clouds, shining white in the last rays of the sun.

Towering to the northwards, is the black outline of Mount Tartara, and a little eastwards, Suleiman Takht (the throne of Solomon). Below them is the wild jagged range of hills through which runs the Khyber Pass. There is almost no vegetation on them, and one understands why the men who live there should be thieves and raiders; they have no other way of living. Far out along the road you can just see the walls and towers of Jamrud, the Gate to the Pass. It was in that Fort that Hari Singh . . . but this story should begin at the beginning.

Hari Singh was Ranjit Singh's greatest general, in those far off days when the British sat and looked at Ludhiana, while Metcalf wrote his diary at the court of the Lion of the Punjab. He hanged men in rows from the walls of Peshawar and the walls of Jamrud, until the mere terror of his name kept the frontier still.

It is said of Hari Singh that he dispensed justice after his bath, while he cleaned his teeth. In India you clean your teeth with a *neem* twig, which you chew and chew until you make a brush, spitting out the chewed bits, brushing, and chewing again. It takes quite an appreciable time. "Imprison this one," Hari Singh would say, spitting *neem*. "Let this innocent one go,"

chewing again. And then, when he reached the end of his twig, "Hang the lot," he would say, indicating the unfortunate remainder.

Then Hari Singh died of fever.

Had the surrounding tribes come to know of this, Jamrud was doomed. A secret messenger was sent flying to Ranjit Singh, while Hari Singh's body was placed in a barrel of oil to keep until help came, and a slight indisposition was announced. The tribes waited and watched.

When the messenger reached Lahore, Ranjit was just finishing his morning ablutions. Without stopping to finish putting on all his clothes he leapt on a horse, shouted orders for the army to follow, and galloped for the Frontier. His followers never caught up with him until midday, and before the tribes had realised more than enough to make them stir restlessly, Ranjit and his army had come to Jamrud. But even so, Hari Singh's body was kept in oil for forty days, and, during that time, his name alone kept the Frontier quiet!

Today there is very little adventurousness about going through the Khyber Pass, at least, in normal times. True, one must be through between certain hours, during which the Shinwaris and the Afridis, who live, one on the east and the other on the west side of the Pass, have agreed not to fire across the road. And you get a permit which you show at Jamrud and again at Landikotal, on top of the Pass. "And seeing there's a lady in the car, we had better send a khassadar with you to Tor Kham," said the kind officer at Landikotal. A khassadar is a tribesman, with a nice British rifle, a British pay day, and no particular uniform. Ours left his rifle behind because it was a hot day.

But there is a certain thrill which, even when it becomes perfectly tamed, the Pass will probably never lose. Below, for motors travel over the nice new military road, is the old way of the caravans. Twice a week in normal times, they come down from Kabul and beyond, long lines of hairy, black camels laden heavily, guarded by men with rifles. There are women, too, striding along with a free masculine gait, and children in the rear herding along cattle, goats, and fat-tailed sheep.

Up at Landikotal, the caravans stop over night in the big walled *serai* under the lee of the fort, and here, because competition has become so keen, the Peshawari dealers come up to do their bargaining before ever the caravans reach the city.

"When the railway goes right to Kabul," said one of these merchants, "the centre of trade will shift there, and Peshawar will have almost nothing."

"Are you anxious to have the railway continue through Afghanistan?" I asked a British officer.

"It would be better for us," he answered. "With a railway and a thoroughly well-trained, disciplined army, Afghanistan would be a much easier job to tackle."

"But suppose you fought her?"

"Just so. In our previous scraps, the difficulty has been that there was no real army to face; we could do so little to get a decisive engagement. It meant a sort of guerrilla warfare which our men had to learn at great cost."

Looking at the Afghan army I realised that, in fact, the trained levies do not present a very formidable proposition. The Afghani of the interior, away from the border tribes, is a smallish man, not so very much of a fighter, and, as a soldier, clad in rather ill-fitting, shoddy khaki, with rifles of a French pattern, he seemed to amount to little. What the King of Afghanistan has to consider when he wants, for instance, to introduce reforms in the Turkish manner are the fanatical Border tribes, not the people around Kabul or even Kandahar.

On the other hand, being himself a Muslim, the Afghan King has in some ways an easier proposition than the British. When Afghanistan is quiet, it is really safer over the Border than on the British side. But it is also true that the British have the worst territory as far as hills and independent tribes go.

"How *do* you keep them quiet?" I asked again.

"Well, partly through fear, but mostly by paying them. This military road through the Khyber, the strategic railway, costs us a good deal in labour. Much more than we need have paid had we been able to bring men from India. But big wages kept the tribes peaceful. It's mostly a question of economics.

The great circular road through Waziristan has done more to pacify the Waziris than an army."

Confirming this, I saw later a letter from a Khan in the depths of Baluchistan: "We have had a bad season, and famine is approaching. If the Government of India cannot lend me so many lakhs, to cope with this, I shall not be able to prevent my people from raiding."

"Where do they get their arms?"

"Oh, some they make themselves; there's quite a nice arms factory in the Kohat Pass, for instance. Some they get from over there," waving northwards. "Some they steal from us. We often know, too, when trouble is brewing because the price of ammunition goes up."

When this conversation took place we were halfway between Ali Masjid and Landikotal. Looking up, I saw on the hillside an old Buddhist *stupa*, ruined and decayed. So the dream of peace once conquered, even here! It conquered even into Afghanistan, where French archæologists are excavating beautiful remains of statuary and other relics. Holding in my hands a beautiful little head, part of a frieze from a *stupa* near Jellalabad (that city which was the first to be burned when Amanullah's troubles began), I gazed upon it thoughtfully. What exquisite calm those sculptured features conveyed, with their half-smile of profound comprehension. And yet, in that very calm, in that very negation of the will to live, lay concealed its own destruction. All that wonderful civilization of the Buddhist kings has gone, swept away so completely by the vital, upthrusting, savage force of Central Asia that, even to discover it, one must today dig under the green mounds which bury it from view. Somewhere in that philosophy was a flaw, some missing connection which made it destructive of itself, and, in the end, unable to resist a dynamic impact.

From end to end of the Khyber Pass, stretches a line of British forts, one almost touching another. Some are still building. Thrown out on commanding hilltops are small blockhouses containing detachments of soldiers. Modern civilization thus comments upon the situation!

But the Khyber Pass, though it is the shortest and most direct opening to Central Asia, is not the only way by which invaders have come. Alexander the Great's main armies, for instance, came down over the Malakand.

It is not so dramatic as the sudden gash through the mountains which is the Khyber, but there is a sense of mystery and beauty about it which is a little rare in this part of the world. For one thing, few Europeans go that way. The road which winds up and around the mountain side is an old Buddhist pilgrim route—though where? and why? I do not quite know. Across the valley, as you begin the ascent, you can see two rounded hilltops, where once stood Buddhist monasteries. At the top of the Pass is, naturally, another British Fort, where the Political Agent lives. Then, quite suddenly, the road descends into the most exquisite valley, a miniature Kashmir hidden among the hills, where white opium poppies bloom, and fruit orchards perfume the air. This is Lower Swat. Just before it reaches the Swat River, the road divides, one part going up at right angles past another British Fort, through Der, up and up to Chitral. Over this, once every six months, the better part of a Brigade escorts a regiment to take the place of the one guarding the pass of Chitral.

High above, a line of snow glitters in the sun. That is the Hindu Kush, remote, lovely wall, silently barring—what?

Swatis are, somehow, a less belligerent, gentler people than those of the surrounding tribes. They have not quite the Pathan dash and sense of humour; but neither have they the treacherous streak of the Mohmands, nor the sudden hysteria of the Mahsuds, who, if something upsets them, are liable to brood silently for a time, and then, without warning, go berserk and kill everyone in sight before, like mad dogs, they can be run down. Their ruler is an able man. "I make my people plant orchards," he said, discussing his policy, "because a man can plant crops, and, having harvested them, go off happily raiding or just moving. But an orchard keeps him busy all the year round. He dare not leave it."

If Swat goes on acquiring land—it were best not to ask how

—from neighbouring rulers, such as Buner, it may one day form an important buffer State. "And then," whisper the British, "let the Russians come and sit on the Hindu Kush. *We* won't care!"

But how many strange things go on in those hidden fastnesses of the hills. What peoples are concealed there—that is the thought that haunts and attracts one so much. Somewhere among them is a colony of Hindustani fanatics, Wahabis, who fled from India many long years ago. Every now and then when tribes rise, a black-robed leader falls in the attack. He is a Wahabi, inveterate enemy of the British, relentless, unforgiving after half a century.

That is the Frontier tradition; never to forget, never to forgive. Here is a Biblical drama, whose concluding act was played while I was there.

Fateh Khan cast eyes of desire upon his uncle's wife. So, killing him, he took the widow in marriage, and, with her, took his uncle's two daughters and small son to live in his house. In due course, lest the boy carry on the feud for his father, he killed him also.

When the time came, and the girls were of marriageable age, about fourteen or fifteen, they appealed to Abdur Rahman, head of the tribe, for justice. The Khan heard them, and handed their uncle-cousin to them for disposal. Borrowing the Khan's sword, the elder girl struck off the culprit's head. Their action met with universal approval all along the Border.

Think of what it meant, in long waiting, in concealed hatred, and careful planning on the part of two girl children living in their enemy's house!

Those houses are really forts. You can see them everywhere in tribal territory; high walled, foursquare, with a tower at each corner where a man with a rifle watches. One shot, one life, is the Frontier saying. But as a guest, visiting, you are perfectly safe—except from rivals perhaps. Any man who, throwing his turban at the feet of the Khan, proclaims himself a guest, under his protection is safe for twenty-four hours, and must be given food and set upon his way securely, though he be that man's worst enemy.

Behind the narrow barred door, you will find a maze of tiny alleyways, twisting and turning. Other small doors, not quite man high, give on to small courtyards, in and around which whole families live. For hand to hand fighting, the design is excellent, and one wonders how such places are ever stormed by men who have no big guns nor bombs. Yet, every now and then, you see such a fort battered, ruined, and deserted.

Of course, not every single chieftain lives in quite this primitive fashion. There is Dost Mohammed Khan, for instance, one of the most powerful men on the Frontier, who holds perfectly nice tea parties for his European guests. True, his men are posted, watching, with rifles and bayonets, round the village. But inside his cool, fountained garden, or in the zenana, with the very charming ladies of his household, one forgets this entirely.

Or the Khan of Hoti-Mardan, an English-speaking gentleman, with an amazing library. "This," he pointed out to me, unfolding a Persian MS.; is really most interesting. It is a history of the Communist revolution in Persia, more than fifteen hundred years ago. Actually, Persia went Bolshevik, though not like Russia precisely. It didn't last. The people hated it, and, eventually, the Communists were overthrown and slain. There is nothing new you see." Perhaps not. But one had not quite expected to discuss early experiments in Bolshevism with a ruling chieftain on the Northwest Frontier!

At Mardan there is a European cantonment, a pretty, little, tree-sheltered place, where you see everywhere the flat, white roses to which Mardan has given its name. Here, people do not live behind barbed wire, because there is no feud with the surrounding tribes. It is the home of one of India's most noted regiments, the Guides, to whom there is a war memorial. Their mess, with its many trophies and fine Buddhist sculptures, is worth seeing.

The Khan of Kohat, who owns the largest arms factory, does not aspire to so many amenities. Nevertheless, his son, a superintendent of police in British service, has opened the first girls' school in tribal territory, with forty or fifty pupils. To

this, he seems to have been influenced by one of the Frontier's most astonishing women.

She is an old lady now, a widow and a grandmother, with a large and flourishing family about her. Once upon a time, she was a dancing girl, beautiful and intelligent, as dancing girls must be if they are to succeed. As they sometimes do, she married a rich Khan, and her strength of character made her a power. It would seem that today the very air of India carries one message to the women: education. This, too, was her dream. And so, in her own house, she opened, and still carries on, a school for girls. With what pride she showed me her youngest granddaughter, a tiny mite in the traditional Pathan dress, long wide pyjamas, a *kurta* or shirt halfway below the knees, her hair tortuously arranged in a perfect British charlady fringe, and, perched on it, something ridiculously resembling the charlady's bonnet, with three ostrich feather tips sticking up in front.

"When she is older," said the grandmother fondly, "I shall send her to Queen Mary College, Lahore. She is very clever. And nowadays young men like an educated wife."

That is true. Pathan and Afghan camel drivers even, taking their animals to Australia, sometimes return with an Australian wife, while the sons of rich Khans, sent to England for their education, bring back every now and then an English girl. But these latter marriages are not very successful. "English girls," said a Pathan with whom I discussed the question, "are perhaps not very adaptable. They don't get on with their husband's families, and want to go home soon. There is one Khan who has married an American lady, and she is very much respected by everyone."

Wandering about the Frontier, I realised sharply how true it is that this is not India. It is a land apart, just as these fair, semitically profiled men who claim to be descendants of the Lost Tribes and call themselves sometimes, Yusufzai, Suleiman Khels, and so forth, are a people apart. Really to know them, is very difficult. I motored myself about as much as I was allowed, but one always had to be in somewhere before dark or through somewhere else by a certain time or was not permitted to go

somewhere else without special arrangements, because "something might go wrong" and one would become an international incident.

Strangely enough, men who know the Frontier very well, who go about among the tribes with comparative freedom, very often meet with a violent end. Handyside, the original of Kipling's Strickland, was shot, after years of charmed immunity. He knew it too well, and one day dared, just as he had so often dared before, walking up to a blockhouse and calling for surrender. That day it was in his *"nasib,"* his fortune, to die and he was killed.

"Border" Pennell, the most loved of all Englishmen on the Frontier, a missionary who dressed as a Pathan and could pass as one with ease, he, too, was murdered in the end. Yet, to this day, his memory is enhaloed among the tribes!

Always that brooding sense of danger, of something with which I had no inner kinship because it belonged to another world; that forthright, destructive, masculine world of Central Asia. I understood why British officers love the Frontier. It is a man-to-man place, where a blow is as good as a word, and the best rule is that of the strong hand and the ready laugh. A hard, alert place, where extreme cold and extreme heat alternate; where beauty is found only here and there, like a jewel embedded deep in rock. But where a stern grandeur, cold, austere, threatening, overwhelms one.

In such places, the fight to live externalises one. Islam prevails there in its simplest form, as nothing else could prevail.

In these people were depths of fanaticism and superstition which would make Islam a "religion of the sword", worlds apart from the tolerant cultured faith of old Granada, Cairo, Baghdad, or Delhi. I remembered how an archæologist told me of his difficulties in trying to prevent the men he employed from defacing the images they uncovered. I realised what their onslaught could mean to India, in sheer destruction.

But what *did* the Frontier remind me of? Suddenly a picture flashed into my mind: the great wall across Northern Britain, and the Romans, guarding it, and paying the Pictish clans to keep the peace!

CHAPTER FOUR

TODAY, TOMORROW, YESTERDAY!

THE Punjab! But, of course, I am prejudiced about the Punjab. I had a very serious love affair there, the kind one never quite gets over. I fell in love with Spring in India.

Just that brief period from early April to almost the end of May, when the weather gets hotter every day, and the Europeans pack for the hills. But out in the jungle the scarlet dâk tree flowers, and *moti, maulsari,* all the different kinds of jasmine, yellow and white, fill the air with intoxicating smells. Then, too, the brain-fever bird begins; one note higher, higher, higher, higher, higher, high—— And he stops and begins all over again like some delirious sound inside your head, which never quite finishes, and never leaves off.

The winter crops are ripe, and must be quickly harvested so that the ground can be ploughed before it becomes too hard. The air quivers with heat, and mirages cover the roads with pools of water which are not there. Dust devils rise and dance and whirl into nothingness. Everywhere the sound that is India; wood doves cooing languorously in the trees; the far off throbbing of a *tabla* (which is a small upright drum beaten with the palm of the hand and the tips of the fingers); and a voice rising and falling on long drawn notes, those Indian notes which finish in the air, as if the singer went beyond ordinary hearing; and somewhere near by a long slow creaking, as a Persian wheel turns and turns, bringing up water, emptying it, bringing up water, emptying it.

Sunset, and long lines of cattle coming home in a golden

cloud; the smell of woodsmoke on the air; the quick harsh chatter of monkeys fighting as they go to bed; and again, far off, the throb of the *tabla* and a boy's voice, singing.

I was new to India, then. Delhi had tired me. I could not make head or tail of anything. So I ran away.

Not very far, only about forty miles. And then it was mid-morning. I stopped by the roadside and pulled cushions out of the car, which I carried to the edge of a field, and sat there, my back against a tree, just looking.

Far and far the wide fields stretched, divided only by low hedges of cactus. At the extreme edge, a clump of trees, out of which rose two minarets like white flames spiring upwards to the sky. About halfway between the extreme horizon and myself, some peasants and a team of buffaloes ploughed. How slowly they moved, like people in a dream, pausing as they reached the end of the furrow, and turning slowly, slowly again. At right angles to them, three or four women, in the deep reds and yellows of India, walked in single file, their wide skirts swinging rhythmically. Above my head, the doves cooed, softly, slowly. The whole thing composed into an adagio movement, hypnotic, dreaming, timeless.

What happened to me then I can never quite explain. It was as if some barrier broke, and everything of my immediate past receded into another life. A life of which, at any time, I had been only half aware, through which I had walked, a shadow among shadows, unreal among unrealities. There was no time. There never had been any time. There had only been unmeaning events impacting upon my consciousness. And here, suddenly, I felt and understood a tremendous rhythmic movement in an immensity of space, a continuity of which I was an infinitesimal part, but to which I *did,* after all, belong. I was nothing, nothing; and yet, everything was me. There was no time, yet I, myself, created Time. Outside of me, it did not really exist. My consciousness made it.

And this was India. But this was something I knew. It knew me. These wide plains, those far off groups of trees, the minarets like white flames, the buffaloes moving so slowly that

almost they moved not at all. I could have kissed the ground. Instead, because life is like that, I sighed deeply and ate an orange.

Timelessness; that is the note of the Punjab. Unlike the wild tribesmen of the Northwest Frontier, next to which it lies, its people are mainly agricultural. The story of the Punjab divides itself automatically into two planes: one, the gorgeous procession of conquerors and kings, rising and falling amid the tramp of armies and the thud of war drums, the other, the long, silent fight of the peasant against nature; the fight for land, against the encroaching desert.

For a good part of Punjab is sand. To the east, a line of white cumuli show where the Himalayas tower into the sky. Northwards the Salt Range country rises, more and more barren as it nears the Northwest Frontier. There, the Government of India works its largest salt mines. Westwards, the Sind Desert, extends into Rajputana, and on to the sea.

Five Rivers, the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Sutlej, the Ravi, the Beas, give Punjab its name. Who can say how many more have been lost in the sand? There are records of at least one, the holy river Saraswati, of which nothing is left except a lotus-filled tank at Kurukshetr.

In the hot weather, the sand whirls up in clouds, blown by the *lu,* the hot, desert wind, and causes dust storms which last for days and days, so that you eat dust, you drink dust, you sleep dust, and in the end, blinded, choked, you are dust. I have wakened in the morning, going through the Sind Desert in late May, and, between dust and perspiration, found my face transformed into a sort of contour map, beneath which the original features were completely indistinguishable.

Given just a little water, however, this sand is transformed into green and fertile land. The Moghals, knowing this, built canals which went to pieces during the troublous days following Aurungzeb. The British have followed suit, tapping the snow-filled waters of the Five Rivers, and now even of the Indus. Wherever these canals go, the desert retreats, and the peasant settles in what are called "canal colonies," to grow wheat, a

little sugar cane here and there, and other minor cereals. So the Punjab has slowly come to be one of the great grain fields of the British Empire, ranking second or third among the exporters to the United Kingdom.

They are tall, sturdy men, these Punjab peasants, in whose veins runs the blood of many fighting races. Their features are straight and clean cut, their skins fair, their eyes steady. On their heads, they wear a round, quilted cap (in some parts of Punjab it is pointed) which, after a time, you realise to have been that worn under chain mail, round this again a *paggari*. Your big landowner, or your nawab, from near Lahore or the Doab country between the Rivers, has his *paggari* so arranged that at one side, the end flares in fine pleats, standing up, which give the exact effect you see on pictured Greek helmets. But very often the peasant working in the fields has only a few untidy yards of cloth wound round his head.

The better class Punjabi Musalman has wide, loose trousers, caught into a cuff at the ankle, but the peasant prefers his length of checked cotton tucked round the waist rather like a Burmese skirt. This is particularly true of the Sikh, who slips his skirt off when he is going to fight, and appears in short pants.

Down in the South, Bengalis and Madrassis, of the educated middle classes, talk a lot about the Rig Veda and the pure Aryan background of India and Hinduism. These Punjabis are the men of the Rig Vedas, descendants of the Aryan invaders. Their blood has been added to by Greeks, by Parthians, by Sakas, a little by Persians, and here and there by Afghans and a few Turks. But on the whole, it is as pure as anything in India. There are many Musalmans among them (for Islam predominates) who are of Rajput blood, and many Sikhs who show distinct traces of Greek.

Hardy, for the climate of Punjab is one of extremes—in December the nights and early mornings are so cold you must have a fire, though in June the temperature goes as high as one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade, and sometimes even higher; brave, for the Punjab supplies some of the best fighting men in India; and persistent, the peasant has seen sweep by him

such a pageant of history as makes one's brain reel to think about.

With his old, single-furrow, wooden plough that barely scratches the surface, the same plough he uses today, he turned over the ground while, on the plains of Kurukshetr, the Kurus and the Pandus, whose deeds are the theme of the Mahabharata, fought their last great fight. On the banks of that lotus pond, which is the holy Saraswati, Shri Krishna the charioteer gave, to Arjuna the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, which has affected the thought of the world. The peasant remembers the Shri Krishna who sported with the milkmaids, worships, and goes to his reaping. In the middle of that same lotus pool, on a tiny island, is one of the few temples to Brahma, the Creator, for this island is his birthplace. Him, too, the peasant asks to bless his sowing, and goes on to his fields.

His ancestors saw Harsha, the last Hindu king, rule at Thanesar, near Kurukshetr, for thirty-four years, and extend his kingdom from Assam to Kathiawar. They saw the Musalmans sweep down from the North, driving the Rajputs through centuries of fighting, back and back into the arid lands of what is now Rajputana. They saw the Lodi kings building great mosques in the flourishing city of Thanesar. Today, the peasant enters Thanesar but rarely. The city walls are crumbling, the gates have fallen from their hinges, the fine houses are doorless and windowless. Only a few people live here and there; and in the mosques, grass thrusts its way between the flagstones. The soul of Thanesar has gone. The city is deserted and empty. But outside the walls, the peasant sows and reaps.

They must have seen, those peasants, Jehangir passing with all his Court to spend some days at the Emperor's shooting box, at Hissar on the edge of the Bikaner desert. As they passed, those brave men, clad in brocades and fine Dacca muslins, hawks perched on their jeweled wrists, the peasant salaamed and gazed, and went back to his ploughing. There is nothing much left of the shooting box now, except the main building where some Europeans live, and into which troops burst, during the wild days of 1857, to find staring at them from the mantelpiece in the large

dining room, a row of Englishwomen's heads. The sand has nearly won, at Hissar, where the dacoits sweep in from the desert, lift some of the cattle for which the place is famous, or break into a house for jewels and money, and sweep back again while the Punjab police climb on to their camels and dash after them.

From nearby, at Hansi, the English sailor, George Thomas, nearly carved himself out a kingdom, sallying forth to fight at Rohtak and a dozen other places, loving a Begam—and leaving her; succeeding until his own people smashed him, and his fort, which lies in ruins to this day, forgotten. The peasant no longer remembers that there ever was a battle at Rohtak. All he knows is that there is a sacred tank, on one bank of which stands a little mosque, on the other, a little Hindu temple, and Hindu and Musalman alike, bathe and worship there.

They built themselves, these peasants, villages with walls round them, to which they retreated when wandering soldiery made existence dangerous for a man alone. Often these villages were destroyed and the peasants fled. But as soon as they could, they returned and rebuilt over the destroyed village. And so you see in this part of the Punjab below Lahore, towns rising out of the plain, crowning hills which are not hills at all, but great mounds of crumbled brick and stone, the remains of five or six previous towns. Such is Sonepat, such is Panepat which have given their names to historic struggles for the possession of Delhi.

Inside their villages, they formed little republics headed by the *patwari*, who undertook all dealings with the ruler of the moment, collected and paid the taxes, gave judgment in minor disputes, and kept the village records.

It is incredible, the attachment of the peasant to the land. And yet a profound truth underlies it. The Indian possesses a sense of affinity with the soil whence he came. Nothing expresses it better than the need he feels to return there, from time to time. If you get sick for any length of time, the Indian will always tell you, "Maybe you need your land; the place where you were born. That heals you." And, sick, he himself returns to his *malk,* his land, to get well, just as, dying, he returns to

his own country, his own land, the place where he was born, to die.

This deep attachment to the soil, together with the village organisation, is what has given India its permanency, its real stability.

Only where land tenure systems have been grossly interfered with has the peasant become excited. But the economic structure of India has, through long ages of development, become so intricate, so closely interwoven, that any change in it must, in the end, affect the land and the peasant.

The main revenues of government in India have always been derived from the land. Under the old system, it can have made very little difference to the peasant who was ruler. Nobody interfered much with him, except when actual fighting took place over his ground. There was very little government actually touching him. He gathered his crops; pooled them for taxation purposes; worshipped his gods, if a Hindu, or the One God, if a Musalman; married; had children; listened to the pronouncements of the village headman and the elders; sat reverentially round a holy man; and so lived; and so died.

Sometimes from among these people, or from among the craftsmen who helped to make the village self supporting, rose a saint and an idealist, whose thought changed the history of India. Such was Kabir, the weaver, whose songs all Northern India knows. Such was Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, who was deeply influenced by the teachings of Kabir.

I went, on a day, to Sultanpur, in Kapurthala State, where Guru Nanak lived much of his life. Sultanpur, the city of the Sultans, was once, like Thanesar, a big town. But it is even more lost than Thanesar in some ways. The main outlines of the city are only heaps of sand and scattered bricks. In what survives of this place, where the Lodi Kings once were educated, there still remain a certain number of weavers and stampers, who, with wooden hand blocks, print cotton bed-covers in rich and lovely patterns. Some of these, the artistically inferior Persian imitations, get exported to America, and this is Sultanpur's main source of revenue.

"Scratching a Living Somehow in the Jungle."

On one side of the city is a small enclosure round the place where Guru Nanak kept his shop. He seems to have been a bad business man, who mixed up his accounts and gave away his goods. After a while he gave up altogether, and spent most of his days in a little house on the banks of the River Beas, praying and meditating.

Stumbling through the loose sand, which makes walking in shoes difficult, you leave the town and go down to the river. The little house is not far from an old bridge, a fine arch where once the Lodi elephants must have crossed and all kinds of traffic went up and down. It is ruined now, though there is still traffic. A man, riding a camel, came from the town and forded the river next to the bridge; a few women with waterpots, laughing and talking as they too, tucking up their *saris,* waded over and disappeared into a grove of palm trees on the other side; a peasant, with a herd of black buffaloes, shouted to them, hanging on to the tail of the last one as they splashed through.

It is a very little house, three sided, so that the river makes the fourth. In the courtyard thus formed, stands a *ber* tree, whose fruit is a kind of tiny, wild plum. "From this tree," a white-bearded old man told me reverentially, "Guru Nanak used to take twigs for brushing his teeth. Now it bears fruit all the year round."

Little, coloured rags hung on the tree, where pilgrims had tied them. The old man offered me a handful of plums from it, and while I sat eating them, spoke again, "And when there is a murder in this town, the tree bleeds," he said.

Somewhere a man was reading the Granth Saheb, the Sikh holy book, in a monotonous sing-song. The river slipped by in silence, green and gold under the palm trees and the sun. An intense peace brooded over the little house. "Here Guru Nanak meditated," spoke the old man after a long pause, "Until one day he disappeared. No one knew where he had gone. After many days he came out of the water. Then he taught us what he had learned."

What Guru Nanak taught them was that there is one essential Truth, of which all teachers have different glimpses. He preached

against infanticide, seclusion of women, drugs, drink, all the evils of his day, as every great teacher has preached. He saw the beauty of Islam, and he saw the beauty of Hinduism, so that, when he died, both Hindus and Muslims claimed his body. He preached Peace, and he left peace forever in this place where he had delved so deeply into his own soul to find these things.

Sikhism, as it exists today in the Punjab, is hardly the religion of Guru Nanak, however. A small section of Sikhs who are not easily distinguished from Hindus, follow his teaching strictly. But the Sikh of the uncut hair, the steel quoit, the sharp edged *kirpan* (dagger) and the steel bracelet, is the creation of the tenth Guru, Govind Singh. And he in turn was created by persecution. These Sikhs, who under the one-eyed Lion of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh, rose to supreme power in the Punjab as far as Peshawar, after fighting the British twice, unsuccessfully, became their most faithful troops.

Without the Sikhs, Delhi could never have been taken. They rushed to attack the Moghal throne because of an hereditary enmity and a prophecy, both of which dated back to the reign of Aurungzeb, the Bigot. Teg Bahadur, one of the Sikh Gurus, was his prisoner, and before he put him to death, Aurungzeb accused him of staring all day into the imperial zenana.

"I was not looking into your zenana," Teg Bahadur told him quietly "But to the western seas, over which I see coming the white conquerors who will end your dynasty." This curious prophecy made the Sikhs friends to the English in the time of great need. Today the Sikhs form only eight and one-half per cent. of the population of the Punjab, but it is probable that they would be even fewer had not the British cultivated them, so to speak, for their military requirements.

But today also, while the great Sikh States such as Patiala and Kapurthala remain perfectly loyal to the British, the Sikhs as a whole are not so friendly. Nor, in fact, is any part of the Punjab, outside of the Indian States, to be relied upon as it could have been fifteen or twenty short years ago.

Behind this state of affairs, lies a long story which has never yet been fully told, and probably never will be. Largely, it began

with the Sikhs, and a very great deal of it is due to the ex-Maharaja of Nabha. A small portion is based upon real grievances, but the greatest portion of all upon a series of official blunders.

That is what makes the story so difficult to follow. One person will tell you that a number of Sikhs emigrated to America, got into the hands of professional revolutionaries, who initiated, and still run, in California, a virulent anti-British secret society, known as the Hindustan Ghadr. These Sikhs, returning, stirred up trouble.

This is perfectly true, but you can't stir up trouble unless there is some on the spot to stir up. There were other agitators at work in the Punjab, and there were Sikhs who really had a grievance. Some had tales to tell of what equality under the British Empire really meant when an Indian tried to go to Canada or other Dominions. The story of the *Komagatu Maru* is told elsewhere. Its consequences have still to be fully realised.

The Maharaja of Nabha was a Sikh Prince with two hatreds as his ruling passions. One was for his neighbour, the present Maharaja of Patiala, of whom he was desperately jealous. The other, for the British. With his birth there had been connected a prophecy to the effect that one day he would rule India from Calcutta. As a matter of fact, he actually did so before he came to the throne of Nabha, when he was on the Viceroy's Council. And before he came to the throne, he loathed the British, and was already in touch with anti-British movements. Openly seditious as he was, however, to say nothing of the cruelties, some of them too dreadful to repeat, with which he was credited, his political influence in British India made the Government hesitate to touch him. Meanwhile, his money did much to foster the Ghadr and other anti-British movements.

There was, also, the Sikh Gurdwara dispute. That was a religious question. Gurdwara means throne or seat of the Guru, and applies to any Sikh shrine. For many, many years the Sikh shrines had been in charge of *mahants,* who appointed their own successors, and in a number of cases made a good thing out of it. A reform section of the Sikh community wished to

abolish this growing evil, and finally tried to do so by means of a passive resistance, which, as usual in India, culminated in bloodshed. This situation dragged on and on for a period of years, during which the whole Sikh community was in a turmoil, and agitators had a clear field.

But the most terrible blunder of all was what is known as the Amritsar massacre.

Amritsar is the Sikh holy city, where stands the Golden Temple in whose tank a Sikh should bathe once or twice in a life time. It is a city, therefore, in which you will always find a floating population of sorts, and a nucleus of Akalis, the ultra militant Sikh fanatics who now have no great love for the British. There are, besides, some carpet factories, yielding the usual number of underpaid, mischievous hands, and the great Sikh university, Khalsa College, whence come hot-headed students. Amritsar is not altogether a nice city, and it can be a wicked one when the lid blows off.

About ten years ago, when General Dyer made his famous and disastrous gesture, the lid did blow off. India was seething with unrest just after the war and there existed in the Punjab a great conspiracy which was about to explode in open revolt. That was the moment when King Amanullah marched his troops to the border, just too soon to escape war with the British. But like the Irish rebellion of 1916, something got disconnected, and the revolt broke out sporadically. Places like Gujranwala, important railheads, went up in flames; and so did Amritsar. All the public buildings were burned, some Europeans were killed, and an unfortunate English lady, riding through the city, was beaten and left for dead by the mob.

By the time General Dyer and his troops arrived, however, things had quieted a little. A projected attack upon the European cantonments had been beaten off by a young British officer, who afterwards was made an unnecessary scapegoat. The city was put under martial law, and all mass meetings properly forbidden.

All that was perfect. But the agitators were still at large,

and they called a meeting just outside the city, in a place known as Jaliarwalabagh, an enclosed ground with but one entrance. General Dyer, with some twenty-five men, resolved to disperse this himself.

The situation was very unpleasant. There were twenty-six men, armed, facing a mob of several thousands, with no firearms but certainly with bricks and *lathis,* a dangerous, hand-to-hand weapon, available. The agitators urged the mob to attack. While the mob milled about, half ugly, half hesitating, General Dyer's men opened fire, and in the resulting panic, some hundreds were killed and wounded and trampled to death.

Of course, it was a horrible business. Yet, at the moment, there can have been little else to do. Loss of control would have been fatal. Unquestionably, this action turned the scale in the Punjab, for within twenty-four hours, the tone of the people had changed, even as far as Peshawar. What was profoundly wrong and shameful about the affair was the spirit of rejoicing shown by the European community, unofficially, in clubs and private houses, and what was stupid beyond all words was the Government's attempt to say nothing at all about the business. All India rang with the story. All India rang with other stories concerning the unusual measures of retaliation, Mutiny vintage, practised by General Dyer on the people of Amritsar after the riots had been quelled. One expression of regret, one official communique, explaining the event and proffering sympathy to the innocent dead, issued by the Government, would have averted all criticism.

But Sir Michael O'Dwyer seems not to have been well-advised. More wisely, the Home Government sent out a Commission of Enquiry. More foolishly General Dyer, whose nerves by this time were none too steady, decided to defend himself, and blustered and bragged in the good old shoot-'em-down style. He had to be broken, or the whole of India would have turned against the British. Meanwhile, Gandhi had his motive for casting off the British with *eclat,* and even the most moderate opinion was shaken. To this day, each time club arm-chair

imperialists in England glorify General Dyer as a hero and a martyr, a thread of loyalty between India and the British Empire is broken.

Amritsar today is still a rather sullen city. It is no longer as easy as it once was to go into the Golden Temple. Though I was treated with the greatest consideration, I had, nevertheless, to take off my shoes and stockings, have my feet washed by a polite attendant, and then walk round in a new pair of men's silk socks which some one produced from somewhere.

The Temple itself is interesting, mainly because of what it stands for, and because of the thin gold plates which cover it, and, reflecting in the waters of the tank, form a glittering spectacle. Rising as they did very rapidly from the status of robber barons to a kingdom which lasted only a short time before the British conquest destroyed it, the Sikhs had no opportunity to develop artistic tastes. Their record remains one of battle.

But they must have been tremendous fellows. I tried to lift some of their swords, that of Ranjit Singh himself, and of Jassa Singh, who founded the State of Kapurthala, and many others. Though their hilts were only the size of my own hand, which is not very large, their weight was such that it was impossible for me to do more than hold them out for a few seconds.

Forty miles north of Amritsar is Lahore, capital of the Punjab. If Amritsar is a difficult city, Lahore is even more so. The population is mixed; Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs, all crammed together behind high walls, surrounded by the remains of a moat, and dominated by a fortress where Ranjit Singh is buried.

The streets are narrow and tortuous—and dirty, though I did not see the drainage running down the walls as described by some travellers. Outside the walls, the houses spread until they reach the beautiful European cantonment, with its gardens, its clubs, its flower-surrounded bungalows, its Government House. Within that swarming city, it is all too easy for rumour to fly through the bazaars in a few seconds, leaving mischievous crowds behind it.

On my first visit to Lahore, I remember that something of

this kind happened. A Sikh looked too closely at a Musalman lady, or made advances. The lady cried out. Somebody hit somebody else. Nearby a Sikh meeting of a seditious nature was going on. The audience, led by the speaker, rushed to the fray, and, getting slightly mixed as to the culprits, assaulted and killed a few Hindus. With that, a three cornered row began, which lasted a week, caused several hundred deaths and the destruction of various temples and houses, and necessitated a British regiment to clean it up. It was not, in any sense of the word, a revolt, but, on the other hand, such riots are always encouraged and fomented by revolutionary agents in the hope that they may be turned into something beyond British control, and without this secret agitation they would not so easily become serious.

Lahore, Amritsar, Ludhiana, cities like these are the danger spots of the Punjab. You see the potentialities when you walk through those crowded streets with all the smells of the East rising about you. You realise that all this life is untouched by anything British; irrigation, roads, all these benefits, really mean nothing, really don't affect anyone here. What matters is the price of food, the sanctity of religion, and how much personal affection a British officer can command. Which is not much because he does not have time to mix very intimately with the Indian world about him.

"But," remarked one of these British officers hopefully, "the peasant will remain unmoved."

We were sitting together in one of the little, open, sentry towers which guard the walls of Shalimar Garden, just outside Lahore. Here Nur Jehan, light of the world, beloved of an Emperor, once walked with her ladies. Below, inside the garden, masses of roses bloomed and fell. A score of fountains played, rising in a long line from the water vista so beloved of the Moghals. Outside, to the right, the walls and towers of Lahore were dark against the brilliant evening sky. Beyond, around, everywhere, spread the wide, still plains. Rioting had begun in Lahore, though neither of us knew it.

"The peasant probably will remain unmoved," I said. "As

he has always done, provided he can keep his land. Everything passes: emperors, kings, adventurers, generals, saints, and beautiful women like Nur Jehan. Fortresses are built, stormed, and ruined. Cities rise in splendour, and decay forgotten among the wheat fields, or amid the sands of the desert. The peasant sees it all, has seen it all, and goes on. Today, tomorrow, yesterday; it is really the peasant who holds Punjab!"

Far over the plains, the peasants drove the cattle back to their villages in clouds of golden dust. Little points of light twinkled here and there as cooking fires sprang into life. The sun sank, and at once it was dark.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE KINGLY PEOPLE

MILES and miles and miles of strange, desolate country, where hills stand suddenly out of flat ground, and along the tops of hills you see straggling walls, fortresses.

The metre gauge train wanders on and on, pausing interminably at tiny wayside stations, and then jolting slowly forward once more. It is called the Delhi-Ajmere-Bombay Mail, and it took unheard of pressure to hold it up for twenty minutes at Delhi. Now it rushes at all of fourteen miles an hour. One might have caught up with it by motor.

It is blindingly hot. Outside, in cool places, the temperature is one hundred and ten in the shade. In the compartment, it wavers between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty. Round about noon you get out and walk up the platform to the dining car. There is only one other European on the train, a British official to whom you were hurriedly introduced in Delhi.

This is Rajputana, the land of infinite romance, the land which has provided tales and songs of heroism and chivalry for all India. The people who have given it their name, the Rajputs, the kingly people, are the descendants of those Aryans who also gave India the Rig Veda, the Upanishads; all the basis of philosophy and religion. A tremendously virile race, their response to India, the land, the peculiar thing that is in the Indian soil and climate, was immediate.

Centuries and centuries and centuries ago they came. Their bards claim for the thirty-six royal races of Rajputs, descent from the sun or the moon, nothing less. There was something in India which made them grow, stimulated them powerfully.

Their brothers went to Persia, and a great civilisation grew there also, but not as powerfully as in India. Other brothers went further yet, to Europe. But something was missing there, something did not develop, and they remained barbarians except for one glorious flowering in Greece.

Rajasthan, the country of kings. Aryavarta, the home of virtue. Can this really be that country? Stretches and stretches of khaki-coloured land, sometimes nothing but scrub jungle where sparse, rough grass, and bare, thorn bushes are the only vegetation. Sometimes a river bed, a quarter of a mile, a half mile, wide, which is only loose, dry sand. On each side, the ground savagely cut up into deep gullies by the floods of the rainy season. Now and then a collection of mud houses, a few trees, and some fields enclosed by cactus.

Almost no people. Here and there in the jungle a herd of black buck stares, frozen for a second into statuesque attitudes, and suddenly dashes away. Very occasionally, a man or two, or perhaps three or four women walking over a fragmentary path, from nowhere to nowhere, or, stranger still, just sitting, like that, in the middle of space.

Ajmere, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Bundi, Tonk, Udaipur; all these names have a rhythm, an accent, something exquisitely familiar, and brave, and sad. Chitor, Amber, Huldighat, Achilgarh; it is like a spell. Down the silent corridors of time comes the sound of trampling hoofs, of sword clashing against sword, the wild thud of war drums, Rajput voices crying "*Ram, Ram,*" in exultant salutation, and, behind it all, the insidious crackle of those flames which, over and over again, finish the story of a great battle and a great defeat: "And then, the warriors putting on the yellow robe, went out to die, and the princesses ordered a great fire built into which they, followed by all their women, threw themselves. And so when the enemy entered over the bodies of the Rajputs, they were greeted only by the flames of the funeral pyre."

When the sun of Greece was setting, and Roman legions were beginning to march forward through trackless forests of Gaul, opposed by barbarians clad in paint and skins, the ancestors

of these Rajputs were Emperors of India, guardians of an already ancient civilization. The last Hindu ruler of Delhi was Prithi Raj, a Chohan Rajput, whose sway extended as far South as the Deccan. Roughly fifteen hundred years ago, he lost the Hindu Empire to the Muslims on the deadly field of Kurushetr. From then on, the Rajputs were driven back and back into what is now Rajasthan. But never quite conquered. Even the greatest of Moghal Emperors, Akbar, whose marvellous court was the astonishment and admiration of Queen Elizabeth of England's envoys—even Akbar could not quite conquer the Rajputs.

Those days of struggle between Akbar and Pertap Singh, the Seesodia prince who founded the present city of Udaipur, provide some of the most thrilling Rajput stories. Moghal rule was at its height. Akbar was a great emperor, a great genius, a great man, who had already once taken and sacked Chitor in the days of Udai Singh, Pertap's immediate predecessor. Nearly all the major Rajput princes had been induced to form some sort of alliance with the Moghal, sending their sons to the Imperial Court, their daughters to the Imperial zenana. Only Pertap Singh determined to regain his lost kingdom.

Winning and losing, losing and winning again; flying for his life to the mountains, to hide in cunningly located citadels from which he might see and not be seen; sometimes wandering through the jungles, when the young girls of his family cried in their sleep for hunger; rallying his broken clansmen to fight once more—Pertap Singh stands for all time as the personified soul of the Rajputs.

Even in his own day he was so recognized. The Raja of Amber, Man Singh, had made peace with Akbar and become one of his greatest generals. But he could not resist visiting Pertap Singh, full of admiration for his gallant stand. He was received, but Pertap Singh made excuse after excuse in order not to eat with him. Among the Rajputs, to evade eating with another is formally to deny his standing, and this is especially true among the princes. Furious, Man Singh left, swearing Pertap would regret this day.

In due course he helped to bring the Moghal army against

the brave Seesodia. Pertap Singh met the enemy at Huldighat, a narrow pass in the Aravallis, guarding the approach into Udaipur.

The story is like that of Thermopylæ. With a handful of Rajputs and a few Bhils, aborigines, Pertap Singh withstood the foe until he was almost alone. Then, mounting his "blue" horse, Chitak, he fled pursued by some of the Moghal cavalry, among whom was his own brother Sukta. But Sukta couldn't bear it. In turn, he slew the pursuers, as Pertap's horse sank exhausted under him, and, dismounting, embraced his brother, and gave him his own steed. Then he went back and told Selim, the Moghal Emperor's son and commander-in-chief what he had done. "My brother," he said, "bears the burden of a kingdom on his shoulders. Seeing him in danger I could not but defend him." With considerable magnanimity Prince Selim forgave him, but sent him away. Sukta rejoined Pertap and fought by his side.

"Ah, yes," said the Englishman, when I spoke of some of the endless tales of chivalry which are sung and told in Rajasthan, "but today the Rajputs are a dying race." I asked him why.

"Well, you see, they were a great fighting caste, full of energy, dynamic. Now they have no outlet, no incentive, so there's opium, debauchery, palace intrigue."

"But they helped the British to break the Mahratta power, in the last days of the Moghal Empire, didn't they? And to hold India when the Mutiny broke? Wasn't it Udaipur who sheltered the women and children of besieged Neemuch, in the lake palace?"

"Yes. We made a defensive alliance with them, and we engaged to protect them. Those alliances became an invisible fence round each principality. No outside influence could touch them. They could not even have diplomatic relations with other princes." He took out a cigarette. "Their marriage laws have something to do with it, too. Nothing more complicated can possibly be imagined. The Rajputs, you know, are all divided into clans. There are about thirty-six royal races, and then a great number of minor clans, all more or less connected with the

leading ones. Everybody in the *gotra* is more or less kin. Certain clans don't intermarry with certain others for all sorts of reasons: degree of kinship, old feuds, alleged impurity of blood, and what not. Then in the clan itself one section may intermarry, perhaps, with a section of another clan, with which a second section of the first clan doesn't marry. So the second section won't marry either with the first section of its own clan."

"It sounds intricate," I remarked.

"Well, yes, it is. The higher the rank involved, the worse it gets. The penalties for a mesalliance are rather heavy. It makes marriage for the rest of the family, with their equals, almost impossible. The whole lot lose their position. And as it is absolutely imperative that all daughters should be married. . . . Of course, in the old days it was perfectly simple; superfluous girl children were simply disposed of at birth. That did something to keep the Rajput numbers down."

The train stopped at Marwar Junction. Small boys ran up and down, carrying pails with tin mugs, or brass *lotas,* shouting, *"Pani, pani,"* in a long drawn howl. *"Cha, gharram, gharram cha!"* Others yelled industriously. A man with a sort of meat safe poised on his head offered *mithai,* various sorts of sweetmeats and roasted gram. Another, crying "Narangi, narangi," arrived with oranges and small melons. A peasant paused to stare, and then, calling hurriedly to two or three women, brilliant in red and yellow, made for a possible vacancy in a third class compartment.

Along the platform, alone, aloof, stalked a proud Rajput, his *safa* in immaculate folds over one ear, the long end swinging nearly to his waist. White Jodhpurs fitted tightly about his calves, to culminate in clever wrinkles about the ankles. Under one arm he carried his *talwar,* a curved sword in a velvet sheath, the hilt damascened with gold. His moustaches twisted fiercely, his haughty eyes apparently saw nothing, but in reality, took in everything. Before him everyone gave way.

Marwar got its name as a corruption of Marusthalli, the region of death. Northwards it is literally that; a desert of shifting sands through which sometimes thrust ridges of bare

rock. On one of these ridges is built the city of Jaisalmer, last refuge of the head of the Bhatti clan which once ruled all Punjab. Like most of the great cities of Rajasthan, this, too, has been sacked amid blood and flames, when sixteen thousand women at a time met death voluntarily rather than fall into the hands of the Muslim besiegers.

Stories of chivalry are also connected with the first siege of Jaisalmer. Rattansi, the Rawal's second son, became closely attached to one of the opposing generals, Nawab Mahbub Khan, and between the fighting they met daily under a tree between the advanced posts, attended only by a few men. There they played chess together and held friendly discussions.

The siege lasted for months, and the besieged were reduced to great straits, when Mahbub Khan's younger brother was taken prisoner. Seeing the state of things and contriving to escape, he acquainted his people with the facts. Then there was nothing for it but for the Rajputs to make their final sally and die. On the fatal morning the pyres were lighted, twenty-four thousand women of all ages died in the flames with all their jewels and other valuables. The Rajputs purified themselves, worshipped, made gifts to the poor, put sprigs of *tulsi* plant in their turbans, and donned the saffron robe. The two princes, their crowns on their heads, led their forces in the sally.

But Rattansi had two small sons whom he wished to save. Mahbub Khan swore to protect them and sent two confidential servants for them. Arriving in the Muslim camp, the Nawab calmed them, and appointed two Brahmins to guard and educate them. After that he, too, went into battle. The Rajputs were slain, and Mahbub had his friend's body carried away and burned. Jaisalmer was an empty ruin.

Later the city was recovered and built up again. It became very wealthy, since a number of bankers settled there, in some cases forcibly, and when the Muslims invaded Marwar, the great mercantile caste of Palliwals also migrated to Jaisalmer, where some of them built beautiful homes of yellow marble. From there they travelled and did business all over India, so that from Bombay south and eastwards the banker, moneylender and grain

merchant (these three go together very often) is still known as the "Marwari," and is in fact originally from that territory.

At present, Jaisalmer is difficult to reach, as one must cross miles of desert by camel or motor, but in a year or two the Bikaner Jodhpur line will be extended right through, and then it will become another place for tourists to visit.

Always, in India, you stumble over cities and territories which show every sign of once having been very prosperous and now are reduced to nothing. One wonders so much why. Why have these Rajput States developed so little, for instance?

"Oh, Indian States you know . . ." said the Englishman indifferently. "What can you expect?"

But, one wonders sometimes, whether that is quite all the explanation. Especially after seeing Sambhar Lake.

Sambhar Lake is one of the great natural curiosities of India. Some twenty miles long, and about ninety square miles in area, you see it first as a glittering sheet of silver, refracting the sun's rays blindingly. The legend is that once it was silver, and then men did such awful things for its possession that the goddess Sakambari transformed it into salt. Actually, it is very shallow, the water at its deepest never exceeding much more than four feet, and sometimes drying up altogether except where it is held by dams. Its bed is of adhesive mud, and this salt mud under the water is really silt, about seventy feet deep, gathered in a rift in the stratified rock.

The salt is brought by the trade winds which blow at high speed all summer across the great, salt marshes of the Rann of Cutch, and become charged with particles of salt which become strewn in the arid wastes near the lake. In the rainy season, it is washed down into Sambhar Lake, and through the rapid evaporation of the water, an inexhaustible quantity of salt has been stored up in the deep cleft. This salt lake is leased to the Government of India, and from it is taken the salt supplying at least seventy million people today.

Salt is one of the great revenue producing sources of the Government of India, and this lake is immensely valuable. The Government of India, having acquired the lake, proceeded to

make it more valuable in certain ways. Salt duties have always been a revenue source in India, and before the advent of the British, each kingdom had its own. There was no uniform salt duty, and of course no control over the manufacture and export of salt in the various States. The Moghal rulers had an inland Customs line, in order to enforce duties on what went into their dominions.

The British wanted something more efficient, a salt monopoly. Under Lord Mayo, they decided upon a scheme to equalize salt duties in all the provinces, then to abolish the inland Customs line, and with it, transit duties, and then to control or shut down all manufacture in Indian States. For British India all this was perfectly splendid. But——

In 1870, the Government leased Sambhar Lake from Jaipur and Jodhpur for a fixed rent plus a fluctuating royalty. A railway line was run to the lake, the works developed and extended, and so forth and so on. There was still the question of competition to be dealt with.

There were two salt mines in Mandi, upon whose production a duty was promptly imposed, but the severest competition came from the maritime States of Kathiawar and from Cutch. Salt manufacture, and the salt export trade there, employed some thousands of people. Therefore, the Political Department approached Cutch, with a view to coming to some agreement for control of salt smuggling into British Indian territory.

When the agreement arrived for signature, it was in the nature of a bombshell. Among the items were: one, That the Government of Cutch shall adopt effectual means to stop the exportation from Cutch by land or sea of salt spontaneously manufactured in the province; and two, the Government of Cutch engages to exercise efficient control over the manufacture and issue of salt, to open no new salt works without the consent of the British Government, and to suppress manufacture of salt at unauthorized places. Other clauses provided for direct British supervision of the salt industry, and, should this prove insufficient, for full control to be taken over by the British. A fixed sum was to be paid to Cutch as compensation.

Now salt being the main industry of Cutch, the State was horror-stricken. True, it had a treaty with the British, confirmed by Queen Victoria's Proclamation, to the effect that the domestic concerns of the ruler would never be interfered with by the British; that he should, with his heirs and successors, be absolute master of his territory; that civil and criminal jurisdiction of the British Government should never be introduced into his territory. But what is a little thing like a treaty when money is concerned?

Almost in tears, the Cutch people pointed out that the extinction of their salt industry would not only inflict a crushing blow on their poor salt traders, but also cause a decline in their trade in pottery wares, and gradually extinguish their import trade with Africa. At that time, about fifty Cutch bottoms were carrying salt to Zanzibar and the east coast of Africa, returning with timber and cocoanuts. The shipbuilding trade would also be paralysed.

At that time, the ruler of Cutch was a minor, unable to control his own affairs. Discussion was barred and the State made to sign. Even more peremptory measures were taken with the smaller States of Kathiawar, whose salt trade was calmly extinguished. The main industry of this part of the country was thus smashed, and it is estimated that in the last half century or so not less than one hundred thousand people have emigrated from Kathiawar to South Africa, Bombay, etc., simply because they could find no employment at home under these restrictions.

What seems, in view of everything, to add insult to injury, is that India consumes about two and a half million tons of salt a year, and while all these salt manufactories are shut down, six hundred thousand tons of India's two and a half million have to be imported from Europe!

Salt manufacture having been thus "controlled" in the maritime States, as well as in the inland States of Rajputana, such as Kotah, the next question was how to increase the supply in Sambhar Lake.

In the first twenty years, the annual production had been increased by a third. To get more meant conserving and possibly

increasing the flow of water bringing salt into the lake. The main stream into the lake is that of the Rupnagar River, which drains in large part from the State of Kishengarh, only one quarter of its catchment area being in the British territory of Ajmere. Kishengarh has no interest in Sambhar Lake, and it is a somewhat barren country whose whole revenue depends upon the land, therefore upon water. Its only supply, except for the monsoon, is the Rupnagar and its tributaries.

The upper waters of the Rupnagar are in the Ajmere district. Two large dams were built there. A third was projected, all affecting Kishengarh's water heavily. Kishengarh's water system needed attention, but when, in 1900, the State brought up a scheme for an embankment tank on the Rupnagar, by way of famine relief, objections were immediately raised on the score of interference with the flow into Sambhar Lake. The British conveniently enough quite forgot about the two dams built in their territory, and offered to abandon the projected third one, if Kishengarh would do likewise.

Again, it was a minority administration. Four irrigation projects in Kishengarh were "postponed" and the State also prevented from strengthening old irrigation works which had fallen into disrepair.

1906 was a bad monsoon, and the villagers, anxious to water their cattle, rebuilt an earthen dam tank. The British demolished it. The State wished to build low, masonry weirs across the river, restore old wells, and sink new ones. The first scheme was totally forbidden by the Salt Commissioner and the others restricted to the point of uselessness. Today, for want of water, a fertile and populous district is desolate, large cultivated areas having become waste. The State, as late as 1924, tried to raise the question of the four irrigation tanks it had wished to build in 1900, and were this time finally refused, compensation of seven thousand rupees a year (that is about twenty-five hundred dollars) being allotted to them for loss of water, and an extra thousand (that is about eight hundred dollars) in satisfaction of all other water claims in the future.

Other Rajput States have suffered badly by reason of the

stoppage of salt manufacture. Visiting Bharatpur in 1900, Sir Michael O'Dwyer noted how certain districts which had once been the centre of salt manufacture and the busiest and most prosperous part of the State, were now forlorn and depressed, with large areas of land lying waste or deserted owing to bad soil, bad water, and want of inhabitants.

So the goddess wasn't so very clever when she changed the silver of Sambhar Lake into salt. Nor is the whole reason for lack of development in Indian States always to be found in the vague phrase: "Indian States, you know . . . inertia . . . corruption . . ."

In this story of the Sambhar Lake, too, you have many of the elements which make India such a difficult place to describe. There are goddesses and magnificent Rajput princes and wretched peasants and the British keeping the peace and thus ensuring the existence of various States, while they get some of the money with which they keep the peace by practices immediately ruinous to some of the people they are supposed to be protecting.

And through it all run threads of beauty and mysticism shimmering and dreamlike. Little pictures return to the memory. A palace door in Jodhpur covered with tiny silver plaques —hands. Those silver hands cover the imprints made in red paint by Rajput princesses going out to *sati* on the funeral pyres of their husbands. You can see fresh ones made by pilgrims, for luck or blessing, on old gateways and temples everywhere in Rajputana. And they are found in exactly the same position on the lintels of lost Mayan temples, deep in the jungles of Central America.

Or, again, an hour spent in a forgotten garden inside the main gate of Achilgarh, that ruined fortress on a spur of the Aravallis, where the gods, responding to the Brahmins' call for help, created the four Agnicula, the fireborn clans of the Rajputs, of which the Chohans were the last. A marble bench under a mulberry tree, an old man bringing fresh grapes and rose apples, pale green and tasting like the smell of those deep red roses

whose petals, everywhere in the garden, drift silently to the ground.

The garden is built along the side of a *talab,* a small lake, where, on this hot day, Rajputani girls have come down to bathe. Their wide skirts, spread out to dry on rocks, look like strange, flat flowers of red and green and yellow. As they slip into the water, their thin *saris* cling to their beautiful bodies, and between sun and water and the deep ivory of their skins, they seem to be clothed in light. Behind them, higher on the side of the hill, grey monkeys leap surprisingly from palm tree to palm tree, their long tails making thin whorls against the pure blue of the sky.

There are places in India which seem to have some strong, peculiar magic of their own. Rajputana is one of these. It is strange that its spiritual power should have been recognised by Indians themselves, but is scarcely alluded to by Western writers on the occult, who are fascinated only by the thought of Thibet. Thibet, which gained what knowledge it may have from Indian missionaries!

Two of the most sacred places in the world are in the heart of Rajputana. One is Pushkar Lake, not far from Ajmere, where there is the only temple in India built to Brahma, the Unknowable, the Only God, of whom Brahma the Creator, and Vishnu and Shiva are attributes or manifestations. The other is Mount Abu, where Gorakshanath, one of the Nine Great Yōgis, lived.

On Mount Abu you see again that strange idiosyncracy of life in India, different strata of people all side by side, worlds apart, unconscious, to all intents and purposes, of each other. The tourists who rush up for twenty-four hours to see the marvellous traceries of marble which canopy the Jain temples at Dilwara; the British official groups who come during the hot weather, and, living wholly within their own circle, go through the monotonous ritual of dinners, dances, polo, tennis, bridge, picnics from day to day, week to week, month to month, are absolutely unheeding, unseeing, as far as the intense spiritual feeling around them is concerned.

For Mount Abu is a place of spiritual education; the last stage but one of the saddhu's pilgrimage. Why it should be so, I don't know. There are no awe-inspiring snows, no illimitable vistas. The highest peak, Guru Sikkar, is only five thousand feet above sea level. The slopes of the hill are sheer jungle, where sloth bear and panther, sambhar and nilghai, the great deer and the blue bull, roam freely. Sometimes an occasional tiger comes up from Sirohi plains below. Tribes of langurs, grey-whiskered, adorable monkeys, frisk about the trees. Peacocks, the royal emblem of Rajasthan, scream from the bushes. As you go higher, black volcanic rocks show more and more among the greenery, the trees are less thick, and skeletonish date palms take their place. Here and there you may notice the yellow *champak* blossom, that sweet-scented flower which is very sacred indeed to Hindus.

Possibly there is some magnetic quality in the earth which contributes to the powers Abu is said to possess. The Aravalli hills are full of various minerals, entirely undeveloped, and are even said to contain precious stones. In any case, to spend even twenty-four hours on Abu is reputed to endow one, under the proper conditions, with certain wisdom. The gods trod here more than once. You may see Rama's footsteps preserved in marble. From the Residency, you look down on a bottomless lake, said to have been created by a goddess. *Rishis* and *munis,* the ultra powerful saints and sages of India, dwell on Abu. And here appeared Adnath, the founder of the Jain religion.

It is interesting to find, living amicably side by side with the warlike Rajputs, Jains, who are the most complete exponents of *ahimsa,* harmlessness, in the world. Ultra orthodox Jain saddhus go about with cotton pads over their mouths, to prevent any small insect from flying in and finding death there. They carry mops, with which to sweep living things from their path. They are wholly vegetarian, eating only things growing above ground, and, incidentally, never eating after sunset. They boil their water, which makes it safe always to accept a drink in a Jain house or temple. Cobras and ants they feed, and I even heard it said, in Calcutta, that rather than destroy the vermin on their

charpoys, string and wood cots, they hire men to sleep on them first, and thus satiate the bugs, in order that they, themselves, may have a quiet night. It is true that the only place in India where I actually saw bugs swarming was in a Jain *dharmsala* (pilgrims' rest house) on a razai (quilted mattress) lent to me while my own was being unpacked.

The hillsides of Abu are fretted with caves, often marked with red paint, and in which frequently you may find saddhus living. All kinds of saddhus come there, ochre and white and black-robed, though not so often the naked ash-smeared variety, because these, when they are not impostors, are not as a rule at the Abu stage. Pilgrims by the thousand toil up the hillside, especially at certain times of the year. And yet, it does not seem a populous place. It is always still and remote.

It is a place of initiation.

Something of the other side of the Rajput, something of the mystical current which, pervading Rajputana, gives it life and force, came to me through many days spent on the mountain peak of Abu, many hours there, sitting at the feet of a holy man. In the East, as everyone who has lived there knows, information is not gained by questioning. You get it by sitting still, day after day, and just watching. The Eastern method of acquiring knowledge is entirely other than the laborious intellectual processes of the West; for the East has never lost sight of the fact that understanding is the only aim of knowledge.

I would sit and watch powerful princes and princesses of high rank come to this holy man. There were rich merchants from far Calcutta and from Bombay, a thousand miles off. There were Rajput *sardars* (nobles) from places I had never heard of, miles and miles away. There were simple peasants, sometimes groups of village women from remote little dwellings in the jungle, where no European had ever been seen. All these, coming and going, to see one man who called himself only "a poor, mad saddhu." Just one man, sitting sometimes in a rock cave, sometimes in a hidden part of the temple, sometimes in the jungles of the hillside.

Much later, when I knew him better, I found that he would

disappear altogether for many weeks. Never did I know at any given moment where he would be next. Only that he went away and could not be reached.

What did all these people want of this man? What did they see in him? He preached no astounding doctrine. He was not performing miracles, making things fly through the air, or cripples throw away their crutches and dance for joy. He claimed for himself no "mastership" nor "adeptship". He accepted no money, no jewels, no rich clothing. Barely a little food and perhaps some fruit one might force upon him, and part of that he would at once give away. He had no flow of eloquence. And yet . . .

And yet in his presence there was an extraordinary sensation of purity and peace. Taking one's shoes off, to enter his presence, one sat there, on the floor, among Indians of all degree, and gradually it was as if an inner light illuminated for one all that one wished to know. All superfluous thoughts, superfluous desires, worries, sorrows, fell away, like dead leaves from a tree, and one reached again the innocence and sincerity of childhood, a more radiant sort of childhood because it had not the cruelty of ignorance.

One saw the faces about one clear into a calm happiness. Sometimes there would be discussion; sometimes people sat silently, contented only to be there. The beautiful courtesy of India avoids unnecessary speech, understanding how much can be conveyed without it.

This power was to me more impressive than one or two less subtle but more dramatic things I saw. But it would be wrong to convey a picture of anything hieratic about the scene. There might be moments, perhaps alone, hearing some special teaching, when one would be overwhelmed with awe. But there were other moments of laughter and simple jesting.

There are reasons why I do not wish to fill in the portrait further. Suffice it that here, in the heart of Rajputana, the hand of a *yogi* lifted a curtain. Half consciously one stepped into another world——

CHAPTER SIX

FEUDAL INDIA

KATHIAWAR is a sort of extension of Rajputana to the sea. This is a very rough definition and possibly unorthodox but it seems like that when you are journeying through it.

In many ways it is even more untouched. Both Rajputana and Kathiawar are made up largely of Indian States, technically self-governing, in the sense that they have kept their hereditary rulers and as much of their ancient institutions as could be fitted in. Actually, of course, the States are controlled by the Political Department of the Government of India. Moral control, with a big fist behind it. But you don't mention these things, because the States have treaties, *sanads,* and other forms of alliance or agreement with the British Government of India, all specifying that there shall be no interference with the internal sovereignty of the State concerned, and so forth and so on.

Kathiawar States are on the whole smaller, and in many cases poorer, than the Rajputana States. The land is poor. The water is often too brackish to be much good for irrigation. What sort of rainfall the monsoon will bring is, therefore, desperately important. Sometimes, after a bad monsoon, swarms of locusts come down from Sind and the North. You see them, like a brown cloud across the sky, for perhaps six, seven, or even twenty miles.

Once I met such a swarm. They had been wandering around Kathiawar for weeks, because somehow the leaders had been

killed or got lost, and the swarm went in circles, not knowing what to do with itself. They had eaten and eaten, until their mouths were sore with eating. You picked them up and looked, and you could see their mouths bleeding. Now they just settled on trees, bending them nearly double, or on the ground, but they could eat no more. Up to this time they had ruined a large number of people.

Coats with collars up and tightly buttoned, topis jammed down over our noses, glasses on, we drove into the swarm. Pretty soon the car had to be slowed down. Locusts about two or three inches long fell into it by the score; locusts hit against our topis, our bodies, our faces, and fell stunned. Locusts piled up wherever there was space for them to pile. They seemed to fill the air, flying in a singularly desperate, aimless sort of fashion. The sensation is indescribable.

That sort of thing, coupled with a drouth, can cut a State's income down to three annas out of the sixteen which make a rupee. Another year there may be floods, with whole villages swept away, crops destroyed, cattle drowned. A third year there may be a frost, blighting the cotton and fruit. Such a frost occurred in 1929, and killed thirty-six people. In the summer it is intensely hot, about one hundred and twenty-five degrees in the shade being normal, except at the sea, where it is naturally cooler.

Cotton and ground nut and a few cereal crops are the main sources of revenue of Kathiawar. Salt used to be an industry, as I have said in the previous chapter. Ahmedabad, which is a British Indian city, is the second greatest textile centre of India, and, also, the home of Gandhi.

Before Bombay and Karachi were started, the Kathiawar and Gujerat ports were the most flourishing in this part of India. Down on the Malabar coast there was Calicut, up here there were Surat and Cambay—both centres which were colonised by rich Arab merchants from Yaman and the Persian Gulf. Further up were Porbandar, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Cutch. Then, in Sind, the Indus up which merchants went to the semi-desert city of Hyderabad.

Porbandar is about the oldest, claiming a pedigree of some five thousand years. Arab dhows, the largest of them about the size of Christopher Columbus' famous vessels, and built with high poops like those early ships, brought gold, ivory, timber, cocoanuts, all kinds of things from Africa, coffee from Moka and Abyssinia, pearls and dates from the Gulf. They took back salt, textiles, silks, embroideries, jewels, pottery, and other products of India.

But now all that trade is moribund. Bombay and Karachi take the big shipping trade, and there is an inland Customs line around Kathiawar, so that even if the States wished to develop their ports they are handicapped to an impossible degree.

This question of the ports is the one very sore point with the Kathiawaris. The British claim fiscal supremacy over India; to which, by right of might, one gathers they may be entitled. About 1917, when concessions were the order of the day, an agreement was reached with the maritime States of Kathiawar, by virtue of which the States promised to enforce the same rate of customs duties as was being enforced in British India, and the British agreed to remove the inland customs line, allowing the States to keep what they made on their ports. The States were to be allowed to develop their ports to their natural limits by normal means.

None of the Kathiawar ports can compete in size and equipment with Bombay or Karachi, but they are naturally cheaper from a shipping point of view because there is no Port Trust to be kept going. The Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, who was once "Ranji", the cricketer, idol of the British public, saw the possibilities of his port, Jamnagar, and decided to develop it to the utmost.

He got British experts over. He arranged to pay for the building of dry docks, sheds, quays and what-not—all the things you do build and get going to make a port—with the proceeds of the Customs. In ten years Jamnagar began to flourish exceedingly, customs duties amounting to about three or three and a half million dollars a year—all went for further development.

Then the British got worried. Bombay merchants com-

plained. The usual scandal campaign started. "Sugar is being brought in to Jamnagar because rebates are given . . ." "Bolsheviks! . . . seditious literature . . ." and so forth and so on. Suddenly the maritime States were summoned by the Political Department. Either they could have British customs officials superintending their trade or the inland Customs line would be reimposed.

The States protested frantically. Nawanagar leading, they pointed to their agreement of 1917. They produced further correspondence with the Agent to the Governor General—the representative of the Government in Kathiawar—defining the question of development to the limits of natural resources. The Department replied that as far as the letter was concerned, though it was written on official paper, signed by its official representative, as the old song in the Mikado goes, it had nothing to do with the case, or words to that effect. Moreover, the Department was not there to argue. It was telling the States.

The Jam Saheb challenged the British to investigate his port if they suspected unfair methods, seditious smuggling, or what not. The Department courteously disavowed any such unkind ideas.

One thing the States felt unable to concede was, precisely, bringing in British customs officials. Indian States are jealous of their sovereignty and, perhaps from experience, terrified of allowing British jurisdiction the slightest foothold in their territory. So the customs line was reimposed, and the ports killed, together with a good deal of Kathiawar's trade. Government in India being nothing if not realistic as regards the States, treaties and agreements exist only at the pleasure of the paramount power.

By way of concession, the Political Department finally suggested, after the Customs line had been reimposed for some time, that the States might be allowed to retain a certain share of the Customs duties, handing the rest over to the British. Thus, in the case of Jamnagar, the State might retain up to thirty-six lakhs—that is about nine hundred thousand dollars annually, of its Customs receipts, handing the other two million to the British. And, of course, maintaining ports, etc., at its own expense.

Such stories as these are unpleasant, but it is quite impossible to understand anything about the development or attitude of the Indian States without studying them. There are two sides to every form of rule, and both sides must be weighed in order to arrive at any sound valuation.

Superficially, Kathiawar is poorer than British India proper. The States there are not very big. Nor can you think of them, or of any State in India, as one solid piece. Nearly all States have bits of British India mixed up with them, and sometimes bits of other States crossing their outline. But the absolute desert does not impinge upon Kathiawar as it does upon Rajputana, with its two desert States, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, and partly desert Jodhpur. Bahawalpur, the third desert or partly desert State, is officially Punjab, but actually the greater part was carved out of Rajput States.

It is puzzling, therefore, to discover, as you go up and down through Porbandar, Nawanagar, Wankaner, Limbdi, Drangadhra, Palanpur, all the innumerable small principalities which go to make up these countries, that, though they are so poor, though famine hovers at times threateningly near, the people look happier than in British India.

This is true, in fact, of any Indian State where the ruler is at all decent. The psychological atmosphere is quite different. The people are much more friendly and courteous, though Indians are naturally polite and gentle. But there are shades and shades of courtesy, to be apprehended by the least sensitive person. Relations between Europeans and Indians are very much better, however, in Indian States.

Kathiawari peasants are tall, strong men, fairly well clad, and, again to my surprise, I found that they owned more personal possessions than I had noticed in the homes of the Punjabi *ryot*. The "mud hut" of the *ryot* is really more like what America knows as *"adobe"*. It is one-storied, and the richer villagers build round an inner courtyard, where the cattle are brought at night. There are no windows and no chimneys, because cooking will be done, even in a Brahmin's house, in a small semi-open kitchen on a little open fire. Otherwise it may be just a brazier,

"Arab Dhows Brought Gold, Ivory, Timber—All Kinds of Things from Africa, Moka, Abyssinia, the Persian Gulf."

what is called in Urdu a *singari,* or a small fire built on a more or less open space.

All the houses have roofed-in verandas and wooden doors which can be locked. At night and during the heat of the day, string and wood cots are brought on to the veranda, and there, with a thin mattress and a quilt, you curl up and sleep. All hygienic and comfortable, except during the rains, which is the one really unhealthy season.

There are no plumbing arrangements, but the intense sun takes care of sanitation very quickly, and villages in India do not smell as badly as many in certain parts of Europe. The Indian bathes constantly whenever water is available. When it isn't to be had, he or she uses sand or earth. One of the most surprising things about India, to the raw Westerner, is the tremendous amount of bathing that goes on. Calcutta residents, for instance, complain that about four in the afternoon, which is the great bathing hour for Hindus and Musalmans alike, water pressure becomes too low for comfort in the upper stories of apartment houses, because everywhere the taps are turned on.

They manage bathing, too, quite calmly in public, at the street corners on railway platforms, anywhere, with perfect decency. You will not see many women bathing in public, except in rivers and tanks, but men, everywhere. All the clothes come off, except a loin cloth, the bather rubs himself with soap or sand by means of his two hands, and pours water lavishly from his brass *lota,* or a white metal mug, over his body. It is the equivalent of a shower bath, and all meticulous Indians bathe in this manner. To sit in a tub full of water, make it all dirty, and get out without rinsing the soapy, dirty water off is considered a filthy Western habit.

Because they wear white cotton clothing, as a general rule, the Indians look much dirtier than they are. Western serge or stuff in dark colors may be worn for weeks in a big city without cleaning, and no one thinks that it really must be unclean to a degree. But white cotton shows dust and wear at once. I was interested and surprised to realize, attending clinics for the lowest classes of women in Delhi, and watching them undergo phys-

ical examination on the table, that their bodies were always much cleaner than their clothes, and certainly far cleaner than those of similarly placed women I had seen in Western cities.

How much one's preconceived ideas became revolutionized by little discoveries made at first hand, like this, can be imagined. India from the inside is so different from India seen superficially. In these Indian States of Kathiawar, Rajputana, and so forth, it became easier to see India from the inside.

Here, as in British India, there is no such thing as a population in any way homogeneous. The original inhabitants appear to have been what are called the aboriginal tribes; in this part of India, Bhils. Over them rolled the Aryan wave, the Rajputs. But they did not destroy their identity in any way. Side by side the two settled down, the Rajput taking tribute from the Bhil when possible, the Bhil sometimes even confirming the Rajput's possession of the land. For instance back in the dim ages, possibly about the second century after Christ, Idar was a Bhil State, still ruled by Bhils. A young Rajput prince, exiled from his own place in Mewar, came to Idar. His father and mother, dead in one of those fearful sacks which so often terminated a war in Rajasthan, had before dying, given him into the care of a Brahmin, who brought him to the place.

Goha, the young Rajput, loved the Bhils, and they in turn grew to love him, and so when Mandalika, their own ruler, died, they elected Goha their prince. And thus was founded the reigning house of Idar.

Following the Rajputs, in the great efflorescence caused by the Prophet Mahomet, Arabs swept down into Kathiawar. Ahmedabad became the capital of an Arab kingdom, flourishing, cultured, civilized. Great Arab saints are buried there, and form a centre of Muslim pilgrimage to this day. In due course, alliances were formed with the Rajputs, and everyone settled down again. Then, about a thousand years ago, the Moghals arrived, and pushed the Arab rulers off their thrones.

I leave out smaller invasions, because they had no lasting effect except for a momentary destruction. The Rajputs fought hard with their Arab ally, but were defeated. The story of

Jamnagar is typical in this connection. Its ruler defeated the Moghals, and then was himself defeated, taking refuge in the hills at the back of his capital. When the Arab power was altogether crushed, the Moghals bethought them. "This man was indeed a faithful friend, and a loyal ally," they said. "Can we not induce him to be a friend of ours, since friends such as these are rare indeed?" The alliance was made, and the ruler of Nawanagar State was reinstated in his capital, Jamnagar.

In Jamnagar you may see, to this day, small masjids built in the courtyards of all the old temples, which were preserved from wreck by the presence of the Muslim holy place. If you stay in the Jam Saheb's beautiful palace you will notice that at lunch and dinner not only Hindu and European, but also Musalman, food is offered to you. That is a tradition of the ruling family. And in the ruler's own apartments you will see, day and night, at whatever hour you pass, faithful Arab guards keeping their vigil.

Nearly all the Kathiawar princes have Arab guards for their most valued localities—the palace zenana and the State treasury. As far as possible, the guards are recruited each generation from Arabia, but they rarely go back, marrying and settling in the State. Wearing turbans, and a species of kilt of striped heavy silk, with a waistband into which are stuck heavy ivory and silver-handled daggers, they look very fierce indeed. Their weapons, however, are usually old-fashioned Arab muskets and rifles—not so effective as they might be. But then what fighting they might have to do would be hand to hand work, after the attackers had passed the military guards around the palace or the treasury.

Besides the Bhils, the Rajputs, the Arabs, the Moghals, there seems at one time to have been an influx of Scythians. Local tradition says that these were troops detached from the army of Alexander the Great, who, if these tales are true, must have brought an immense and heterogeneous body of fighters with him and left a vast number behind in India—strayed, lost or settled. These are the Kathis, from whom Kathiawar takes its name.

Some small Kathi States still exist. Their rulers are bound

by a peculiar custom, which forbids intermarriage between the child of one chieftain and the child of another. The young Kathi prince must find his bride among the peasantry, and the young princess has no other choice. It works, apparently, quite well, except that the princess's bridegroom usually has to be given some sort of an allowance in order to support his bride in anything like the comfort to which she has been accustomed.

Throughout Kathiawar, in the peasants' houses, and sometimes for sale, you may see beautiful chests of all sizes, covered all over with finely wrought brass work. These are Kathi dower chests, one of which every Kathi girl takes to her new home.

Those long, hot, happy days I spent loafing round Kathiawar, had a charm all their own. Little incidents stand out like cameos. There was the day I decided to accept the Yuvaraj of Limbdi's offer to drive back with him from Jamnagar to Limbdi, by motor. Unfortunately the chauffeur, in the morning, had mentioned the name of Droh, a State whose name, spoken before lunch, is most unlucky, and deprives the wretch concerned of his midday meal.

Consequently, we stuck in a river bed for some hours, and missed our luncheon hour completely. Bullocks were sent for and arrived in droves, branches were cut and pushed under the wheels; nothing happened. According to all foreign ideas of Indian princes, the Yuvaraj should have ordered immediate punishment for everyone concerned; instead he proceeded to finish a thrilling detective novel with perfect calmness, while peasants, drivers, aides-de-camp, and every sort of passerby clamoured and raged round the car. It was a lesson in Oriental acceptance of the inevitable—and a very sensible mode of conduct at that.

Another picture rises to my mind, connected with an Indian State. We drive, the Dewan and myself—the Dewan being the prime minister as well as the ruler's second son—across country on a flaming day. Every now and then, on the horizon, beautiful lakes appear, their clear blue waters sparkling and reflecting the sky and the trees about them. But they are not real—the water is far too blue and too clear for that. These lakes, cool and

glamorous, are mirages, just as the water which so often seems to cover a Punjab road in hot weather is another form of mirage.

We are going to a village, miles off. For many years this village has carried on a vendetta with a neighbouring one in British India. Sometimes there have been *lathi* fights—and since *lathis* are brass bound, bamboo, single sticks, often weighted, they can be deadly weapons. Men have been killed and injured. Whence, prolonged correspondence with British India on the part of the Durbar—meaning the State—or vice versa.

Now a formal reconciliation is to be accomplished. The British India villagers have come to the State village, as honoured guests. Under the big peepul tree, just outside the village proper, chairs are set for us. In two lines, facing each other, and converging at the end to form an ovoid ring, sit the opposing villagers. Boys and women hang about in the distance.

"We had better begin," says the Dewan. The headsmen of the two villages move into the centre of the ring. Others bring a small brass bowl containing an amber liquid. A small quantity of this is poured by one into the other's hand, and is lapped up with every sign of satisfaction. Follows a gulp of tea. The drinker then rinses his hand and dries it on the other man's *paggari*. His fellow then repeats the ceremony, and the Dewan himself is obliged to join and thus seal the pact. "What is in the bowl?" I ask.

"*Kasumba*—liquid opium, you know. It is the traditional way of drinking fellowship. They love it."

The Dewan proceeds to deliver a short but effective harangue on the value of peacefulness all round. "I'm telling my people I shall do dreadful things to them if they do any more fighting," he whispers to me. "Now they are going to entertain the others to a love feast. I do hope they won't all get drunk and start fighting again."

All this work of settling a long standing quarrel about boundaries and petty misdeeds has been done out of court. No expensive litigation, no pleaders making confusion worse confounded. It is all personal influence. Autocracy has its points in India.

There are gypsies in Kathiawar, also. They live in certain places, often just outside a village, with which they have but few dealings. In appearance they strongly resemble Spanish gypsies, with fewer clothes on. How long they have lived there no one knows. They do a little hunting—a little more or less surreptitious salt making, and raise some cattle. Kathiawar is noted, also, for its breed of horses, which seem to have some kind of Arab strain.

There was a night when they danced for me. It was one of those unforgettable Indian nights, when the moon, the big stars, the deep blue of the sky, and the clear air, combine to make you dream. Far off jackals howled, and now and then one heard the mad laugh of a hyena. Sitting on a mud platform, representing the *chabutra* or terrace of justice, outside a village, I watched the flickering lights making Rembrandtesque chiaroscuros of the wild dancing groups before me.

They had a maypole—of all the unheard-of things—but they had always had a maypole. Round this, first, they danced in graceful, intricate measures, far more intricate than anything English, singing. The drums beat in involved accented measures, and from time to time the gypsies crossed and clashed short sticks.

Then they did comic groups, ridiculously like the *Chauve Souris,* from which one would detach himself and break into a furious Cossack dance, leaping, crouching, and kicking his feet out from under him. When they were not singing semi-sacred stories about Shri Krishna, they were elaborating extremely frank topical verses.

But, I asked myself—how did these people who certainly had never seen English country dances, nor Cossacks, nor movies —how did they come to know these things? They danced like this generations ago, before even the English came to India. Could it possibly be that their wandering brothers had taken these accomplishments into Europe?

Some day, perhaps, sociologists, psychologists, ethnologists, and all the other theorists in humanity, will spend more time seriously studying India—that laboratory where all human rela-

tions are being worked out. They will return probably wiser and less theoretical.

In Kathiawar, which is one of the least known, least travelled parts of India, one could begin to estimate values. There was the vexed question of Hindu versus Muslim—Jamnagar showed more than traces of Hindu-Muslim friendship. Among my friends I saw a Rajput prince of ancient descent counting as his most dear and intimate friend a Muslim prince. There was no trace of any Hindu-Muslim conflict except when provoked by outside agitators.

All these different races and classes mixed up together—not losing their individuality, not attempting to impress it upon their neighbours—what a richness it gave to the pattern of existence! This was part of the fascination of Indian life—part of the depth of Indian culture and thought.

Perhaps these small Kathiawar States are uneconomic, from the point of view of administration. A small State cannot afford what a big State might. But their very smallness allowed of an intimately personal method of rule, and this, one began to understand, is India's pressing necessity. A Raja who can go out among his people, send his sons among his people, having autocratic powers, able to redress grievances by an immediate gesture, satisfies some profound need of the Indian heart.

These things come to one most clearly by means of little experiences, deeply felt. An hour or two in a village, watching a feud being ended, is worth days in Delhi, talking with politicians. To understand India one must live India, be India. Then try to estimate values not in terms of comparison with Western "progress," Western desires and ideals, but in terms of concrete results—individual happiness, individual peace, social breadth and colour.

In terms such as these, Kathiawar comes out well. It is the life of the West that gradually becomes a question.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HIDDEN SCEPTRE

IT was while I was roaming about Kathiawar in a perfectly Oriental way, refusing to rush round and collect statistics, or see sights just for the sake of seeing them, but, instead, watching the scene of daily life unroll itself before me and living in it myself, that I came across the head of the Shankaracharyas.

The Shankaracharyas are Brahmins, of the school of that great commentator upon the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* whose name they have adopted. In the old days—those remote days of Indian history of whose exact date it is so difficult to be certain, perhaps a thousand years before Christ—they vanquished the growing power of the Jains. Later, they combatted the religion of Buddha. Possibly their tremendous success in exterminating Buddhism as far as India was concerned had something to do with the fact that the Jains survived, though in diminished numbers.

Jain tenets so closely resemble the original doctrines of Buddha that the great reformer might have been inspired by them. And when the war of extermination against Buddhists broke out, it is just possible that those who neither died nor gave up their beliefs drifted naturally into the earlier faith. But this is pure speculation.

This head of the Shankaracharyas occupied the *gadi,* the throne of the Brahmins. There are four *gadis,* one for each cardinal point in India, whose occupants are considered to be the living incarnation of god, and are treated as such. The Western *gadi* is at Dwarka, the birthplace of Shri Krishna, at the extreme western point of the Kathiawar Peninsula.

Whatever is written, and there are many secret MSS left in India, carefully guarded by such Brahmins, a man such as this has access to and knows, as well as much that is not written. He is not, of course, as great as a full *yogi,* whose teaching is the most secret and the most complete of all, but certainly he holds the keys of hidden learning whose immensity the West apparently does not realise. Talking with him, one gradually understood that this man knew what Egypt forgot and learned again and forgot once more; what, after the Crusades, percolated to the West in meaningless scraps of symbols and words and ideas surviving today in the mumbo-jumbo of modern occultism.

To look at, a thin-faced, ascetic figure, with brilliant deep-set eyes. How strange to think that here was one whose hidden sceptre far outweighed the blatantly obvious rule of the foreign conqueror; who represented a tremendous secret power, going on for century after century, regardless of what Emperor sat upon the Peacock Throne in Delhi, or, six thousand miles away, in a grey palace under misty English skies.

There are in India many Brahmins, even many sub-castes of Brahmins. Some are ignorant and hopelessly degraded; some are westernised gentlemen occupying important positions in the States or the Government of India; some are scholars; some craftsmen; some even soldiers. Not very many know anything of the secrets guarded in the temples. And those who do, are never the gentlemen who, living a life of lies and impurity themselves, like to assume priestly and scholarly airs *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world and discourse upon *shastras* and *Vedas* of which they understand nothing beyond the bare words.

One finds these more often in the South, in that *"kukarma des,"* land of vice, as the Puranas term it. A thousand miles or more away from *aryavarta,* the home of virtue, past the line of the Vindhyas, you come first to the great plateau of the Deccan, and then, dropping downwards, to the flat, seacoast lands, Madras, Bengal, a tip of Orissa, and, on the extreme west of the Peninsula, the Malabar Coast.

The Deccan plateau is supposed to be the oldest part of India, geologically speaking, except possibly the Himalayas.

This is another India, an India of paddy fields, palm trees, deep, glossy greenness, thick jungles where wild elephants move silently from sunlight to shadow and tigers slink through the long grass. It is an India of mountains planted with grey-green eucalyptus and red-tinged quinine trees; of fertile red earth; of tumbled rocks among which are sudden temples, hollowed in the rock itself, and painted in stripes like the tiger. Eastwards, an India of sluggish waterways, and malarial lands at the foot of the tea plantations on the hill slopes of Assam. Westwards, an India of lakes among low hills, and, south of that again, of white, shifting sands through which the invading sea creeps and swirls, and where tufts of cocoanut palms holding together little islands of sand amid the drifts, show where a few poor fishermen have their huts.

This is the South. When travellers speak of the degradation of Hinduism, they are referring really to the South, where old, old magic survives, dark and terrible. The magic is older than the Hinduism which has absorbed it, as it absorbs everything. Voodooism, witchcraft—those magics of blood and sex, so ancient that their origins can hardly be traced, derived from peoples living strongly before the Aryans came, fighting the Aryans strongly and yielding inch by inch—these are the undercurrents of this land. You cannot understand the meaning of anything in it, until you grasp something of the interaction of these different spiritual and cultural forces, black and white, rising and falling, spreading and shrinking, in this amazing land.

Child marriage in its most acute forms; *devidassis,* the girls offered to the gods; Jagganath, the god whose name has come to mean a car of death; tortured saddhus.

Sex-magic radiating from Kalighat, where the symbolization of ancient sacrifices is found in the goat; sex-magic in the lower forms of the Tantrik cults. Witchcraft, in certain places so prevalent that if you notice the earth near your doorstep freshly disturbed, you dig. It is more than likely that you will find there an image stuck with thorns. Human sacrifice again in the cult of the Thaggi, those wielders of the silken noose, who strangled in the name of the Dark Goddess and were only very recently

exterminated. All these things are but survivals of ancient dreadful cults, but still, cults representing something real and fundamental in existence,—another side.

The wise old Brahmin to whom I poured out some of these impressions nodded slowly. "Yes," he said. "Yes, in a rich soil, weeds grow easily."

The symbol of Rajputana is the blazing sun. This is the country of the horned moon. You see it most frequently on the temples in Madras, the moon and the trident, the moon's horns upwards like the moon under the feet of the Sistine Madonna.

At first sight Madras seems all temples; Madura, Tanjore, Trichinopoli with its Golden Rock, Puri, Bubaneshwar. Dreams of wild, fantastic carvings so intricate as to tire the eye, so tremendously vital in their surge of movement. Frieze after frieze of gods fighting, gods dancing, gods processioning with elephants and tigers, goddesses immobilised in stone which has somehow caught the supple movement of living flesh.

Thousands of pilgrim worshippers come to these temples all the long year around. And yet . . . thousands more do not come. There is nothing more puzzling and sad than the country around Bubaneshwar in eastern Madras, where, in stretches of wasteland, stand scores upon scores of abandoned temples.

Their red and grey stone, so wonderfully and delicately carved, is yet strong enough to have resisted wild flood and burning sun. Untouched, massive as Egyptian monuments, they throng the land, silent, soulless, empty.

Inside, there is almost no light. The interiors are small compared with the whole structure, and the roofs so low that they oppress you. You feel the whole towering weight of the temple pressing on your head. It is like a cave hollowed in decorated rock, walls and roof blackened by the smoke of innumerable, sacrificial fires.

Before the British came to Madras, and Madras was their first real foothold in India, there were three strata here: the Brahmins, the *jagirdars* (big land owners), who were largely Muslim, and the peasants. It was the policy of the East India Company to crush the Muslim *jagirdars* as much as possible,

which policy was carried out with great success, leaving the British, the Brahmins, and the peasants. You feel the power of the Brahmin in Madras.

He was a power before the British came, anyhow. The Jesuits, the only Christian missionaries who ever had any real knowledge of India or any understanding of Indian psychology, fully realized that, and reacted accordingly. Father Nobili, in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, setting the Jesuits' work on foot, became the pupil of a Brahmin, and was, finally, given the status of a Brahmin in Madras. At Madura, the Jesuits built a college especially for Brahmins. They understood perfectly that there was no difficulty about the conversion of the lowest classes, who had all to gain and nothing to lose in the process, but that these very conversions would act as a deterrent to the others.

On the extreme end of the peninsula, round Tuticorin, the Paravas, a pearl fishing caste, earned the distinction of being the first to convert *en masse*. They saw the light, like Constantine the Great, for adequate political reasons. Muslim pirates were making their lives a misery, and the Portuguese were prepared to protect fellow Christians, especially if, in addition, an annual tribute of two boatloads of pearls might be counted upon. The Paravas were only too pleased. Pearls and conversion seemed cheap in return for protection. Especially as, after receiving magic bits of paper with strange *mantras* on them—certificates of baptism and their new names—they went on worshipping their own gods in the good old way.

Possibly because the Brahmins were so powerful, so haughty and so intolerant, you notice more indications of Christian activity around Madras than elsewhere. The higher caste Hindu often turns to Theosophy, or, sometimes to Brahmo Samaj, a reform movement within Hinduism. The depressed classes swell the ranks of Indian Christians. Depressed classes is the polite name for untouchables and near untouchables.

In the same way, as a recoil from the possible weight of Brahmin rule, there has grown up politically a Non-Brahmin Party which successfully opposes the Brahmins in such things as munici-

pal elections of Madras. Thus are the words of Henry Mead, the English journalist, fulfilled, when he predicted in 1857 that the policy adopted by the East India Company was fostering what in modern terms we call "the rise of the proletariat." But —not of the peasant.

In the Maratha country of Western Deccan, the sceptre falling from the hands of Shivaji's nerveless descendant was picked up by his Brahmin minister, the Peshwa or chief secretary, who ruled from Poona until the British threw the dynasty out. Among the Chitpavan Brahmins, lingering dreams of their comparatively recent power lingering may have motivated the first post-Mutiny conspiracy against the British, which began in Poona.

In the history of the Deccan, you come across interesting instances of Brahmin and Muslim friendship. The great Bahmani dynasty, which ruled the Deccan for two centuries, from 1347 A.D., was founded by one Zafar Khan, who was the servant of a Brahmin at Delhi, and seems to have been greatly attached to his master. Then there is the famous incident of the Brahmins who, when Tippu Sultan was besieged by the British, came forth secretly and offered all the gold in their possession to induce the attacking forces to lift the siege and go away, leaving them their Muslim ruler.

But to understand about Tippu Sultan, you must go to Mysore, and visit his tomb at Seringapatam.

It stands within the precincts of the Fort, whose central buildings are a large Hindu temple, and a masjid. When one sees the temple standing there, one begins to wonder how Tippu Sultan, who has come down to us as a cruel persecutor of all non-Muslims, allowed it within his own special radius.

The tomb is somewhat to one side. On approaching it, you pass the graves of British soldiers killed in the last siege, in which Tippu himself died. Rather humble graves, rather grass-grown and not well cared for. You pass, enter a gateway, and, at the end of one of those vistas the Muslims always designed so well, stands, on a platform, the domed building which is the tomb.

And this is the unexpected. Your first, intense impression is one of ineffable peace; a peace like a clear light about the silent

building. Your next impression is that pilgrims come here. There are a few dwellings at the side, obviously ascetic in character. A sense of guardianship.

It is a little difficult to explain. But certain tombs convey very clearly an impression of the person who is buried there; they have a strong spiritual atmosphere. Some are repelling; some attract; and others are perfectly blank. Tippu Sultan's tomb is like a holy place, exquisitely serene.

Taking my shoes off, I wandered around. It is beautifully clean and cared for. The net impression is black and white—black and white marbles interpatterned. Everywhere religious sayings inscribed, breathing faith and humility. To one brought up with the conventional idea of Tippu Saheb, a cruel, licentious, bigoted, treacherous figure, an extraordinary revelation.

He hated the English, of course, accusing them of treachery and the lust for conquest. As regards treachery, he had had unfortunate experiences with the English rulers of Madras, who had not always lived up to the terms of their agreements with him. In the time of his father, Hyder Ali, the conduct of the British at Madras had exasperated not only Mysore, but the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas into an alliance against them. For a time the Mysore forces were able to invest Madras itself, but eventually peace was concluded on the basis of no indemnities, no territorial aggrandizements.

But Tippu remained implacably hostile to the British. By 1790 the latter managed, in various ways, to secure the alliance of Hyderabad and the Marathas, both jealous of Tippu's power, and wrested from him half his dominions and fifteen million dollars indemnity.

A good deal of British policy at this time was inspired by Franco-British jealousy and opposition. Napoleon understood the value of India, and French policy at that moment was particularly directed along the lines of friendship with the Muslim powers, under whose shadow they hoped to acquire influence. Therefore, British policy took the line of crushing the Muslims as far as possible, since they made up the most serious fighting power.

Hyderabad became an ally of the British. Tippu, who preferred the French, was smashed. He died gallantly resisting the British at Seringapatam, and his territories were divided between the British and the Nizam. Once he had gone, it was easy to annex the Carnatic, ruled by the Nawab of Arcot, and the principality of Tanjore, while, by way of soothing the possible fears of other rulers, who might imagine that the British were out for wholesale annexations, the central portion of Mysore State was restored to the former Hindu dynasty in the person of a baby Raja.

Mysore was, of course, recreated on certain terms which deprive the ruler of much of his power. Theoretically, Mysore is a major State, actually the Maharaja can do very little without British sanction. Succession to the throne is regulated by the British; the military organization of the State, its enlistment, equipment, etc., are fixed and directed by the British; the telegraph is part of the British system; British laws and regulations instituted during the British jurisdiction must be continued.

The Maharaja may not employ in his service any person not a native of India, except with express permission; the manufacture of salt and opium and the cultivation of the white poppy may be prohibited or limited by the British, and any regulations they think fit regarding their export and import enforced; the ruler must, at all times, conform to such advice as the Governor General in Council may give him with a view to the management of his finances, settlement, and collection of revenues, imposition of taxes, administration of justice, extension of commerce, or anything else connected with his administration.

Mysore is the show State of India; the place "you simply must see," but it is not a living place. Mysore City has been aptly described as "a fairyland deserted by the fairies." It is perfectly beautiful; the Maharaja stages the most wonderful pageants, in the form of State festivals and processions, which are attended by thousands of visitors, but it is all too clean, too ordered, to be perfectly true.

That is not to say that there are not good things being done in Mysore State. Electric power works, sandal oil factories, art

institutes, and, perhaps the most important in point of size and expense, the new Cauvery Dam.

The Cauvery Dam! Let into the wall, at the entrance to this huge project is a stone tablet, in Urdu, with an English translation, commemorating the inauguration of this dam, and stating that whoever shall take up and cultivate the waste land irrigated by the waters thus provided, shall be for ever released from all taxes thereon because it is a cruel and unjust thing to tax the men who break virgin ground and make it productive.

The Urdu tablet is much older than the English translation because it was written and set up by Tippu Sultan, who, nearly a century and a half ago, foresaw this dam and began it. It is a commentary upon what he might have done, that for so many, many years after his death the work was abandoned.

Those who are interested in astrology will be interested to know that Tippu, on this tablet, sets out the position of the stars at the time, and that the work was begun under the sign Aries, with Saturn very prominent in the map.

All these things went through my mind as I sat thinking on the steps of the platform where Tippu's tomb stands. He was crushed because he was the most serious opponent the British had, a man who might have built up a great power in the Deccan, a genuine ruler. Sincerely loathing the British, against whom he had a personal grievance, he turned to the French, and that made his downfall an imperative act of British policy. His negotiations were not completed, the French were not there to help him, and he faced the British alone, while Napoleon, in Egypt dreaming of an Indian Empire, was turned back by the English at Acre.

Napoleon and Tippu Sultan, two great men whose paths for a moment touched, who both were forced by the play of destiny to become less than they really were, soldiers rather than statesmen. Whose ruin, each in his own day, ensured the rise of the British Empire.

In his day, Napoleon, too, was called a monster by his enemies. There was no epithet too bad for him, no calumny too great. But in time, both his greatness and his weakness came to

be acknowledged in their true colours, and no one now speaks of him in such terms. Will history, one day, deal justly with Tippu Sultan also?

Elsewhere in the Fort, you may see Tippu's summer pavilion, where Wellesley stayed after his victory. It is a cool, delightful erection amid quiet gardens. The interior is panelled with dark woods, lightened by paint and gold; all around the outer veranda, the walls are graphically painted by an unknown artist.

He had a sense of humour, this artist. The scenes are, on one side, those of battle, Tippu defeating the allied British and Hyderabad armies, with a wealth of amusing detail; on the other, a durbar, with portraits of innumerable princes. The whole thing is in perfect preservation, and there are no ghosts about it. That is curious. No sense of past horror or lingering fear.

There are the dungeons too, in which he imprisoned some British officers; an incident made much of as one of the records of his cruelty. Perhaps he treated them very badly, but the dungeons are not at all bad, not, in fact, so very much worse than many modern gaols in India.

The gateway under which Tippu fell, fighting his last fight, the plot of grass grown land, enclosed by a fence, where he actually died, on the far opposite corner, the column raised by the British to the memory of their dead also. How can one explain the feeling of pathos and regret? It was not because the British had won, but because so many lies had been told to afford a moral justification for what was, after all, a naked, brutal expediency. One had learnt so bitterly in the great European war that it is precisely these lying, moral justifications which make victory in the long run so poisonous for the victors. When history becomes really truthful, the world will take a long step towards civilization. But the devils of the first Aryan records were only the original inhabitants of India fighting for their own homeland! We have advanced no further than that.

Just outside the Fort at Seringapatam, there is a haunted bungalow with a strange history. In it there once lived, somewhere in the early nineteenth century, a Colonel Scott with his

wife and daughters. On a day, he returned home to find all of them dead from cholera. And there and then he, himself, inexplicably disappeared.

The river turning around the Fort runs past the bungalow also. He may have drowned himself. He may have gone mad and wandered away to be killed by tigers, or to become one of the many saddhus of India. Nobody knows. There never was any trace. And nobody has lived in the bungalow since.

Perfectly preserved, you may see, going through it, something of the way in which the British lived in those days. The furniture is old Indian, and really interesting. In the main room, on a kind of high chest, is a piece resembling an exaggerated American porch swing, big enough to lie on, which was the Colonel's seat when he dispensed justice. You see similar pieces in Indian houses today. The rooms are tall and cool. Steps lead to the river, and on each side of the steps are little stone pavilions. In its general aspect, there is a certain grace and charm about the building which one wishes the modern P.W.D. had been able to infuse into, say, Delhi.

What a contrast, to go from the intense stillness of Seringapatam, whose strange peace is like the scent of unseen roses on the air, to alert, modern Bangalore. Bangalore is the British civil and military station, located in thirteen miles of assigned territory in the middle of Mysore State. It is dusty, it is ugly, it has an excellent climate, and it bids fair to become India's Hollywood.

There are one or two motion picture companies working around Delhi, but the extremes of climate there, coupled with the fine, fine sand dust always in the air, makes it a less fortunate spot for photography. Bangalore, a couple of thousand feet above sea level, where one can work all the year round in comfort, is an ideal place, and there are about half a dozen companies turning out films in that neighborhood. By now, India has its own film stars, such as Miss Sitadevi, Miss Mani, Mr. Harilal, Miss Jamna, Miss Heera, and many others.

Indian-made films, though cruder from the point of view of technique than Western ones, are immensely popular. The com-

panies are Indian-owned, and very often Indian directed, though in the case of one or two ambitious productions, German directors have been imported. But this proceeding has not been markedly successful, because in dealing with Indian subjects and Indian players, the Western psychology was a little at fault, leading to certain mistakes in etiquette and attitude, which tended to make these pictures meet with disapproval.

The Indian public never objects to anything shown in Western films, picturing the West, but its own pictures are all highly moral in viewpoint and lesson, though at times astonishingly and naïvely frank in their captions. Gods or women are their central figures, and they love to depict the heroism of bygone Rajputanis: "as quick with the sword," as one advertisement puts it, "as any man!"

If the recommendations of the Indian Cinema Committee ever go through, it is possible that big studios will be built, with modern equipment, for hire to various Indian companies, and a real Indian Hollywood coming into being will make the Western companies sit up and think.

It was *Moharram* when I reached Bangalore. *Moharram* is the month of mourning which commemorates the tragic martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the Prophet's grandson, at Kerbela. There are two main divisions in Islam: the Shia, which upholds the rightful succession of Hazrat Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, to the Kaliphate; and the Sunni, which backs that of Abu Bakr, the *de facto* first Kaliph. *Moharram,* obviously, is more intensely felt and observed by the Shias than by the Sunnis.

During the days of *Moharram,* all the incidents relating to the martyrdom are relived with a depth and vividness of feeling almost impossible for the Western mind to grasp. On a night, I went to a women's *majliss* (assembly), at the mosque, where one of these incidents was, not commemorated, but relived with prayer and mourning. It was hot; it was crowded, many Sunni spectators being present; it was late at night. Ceremonies in India are rarely carried out with the beautiful mechanical precision of the West. Everyone takes part in them; they are filled

with small human details, sometimes funny, sometimes pathetic; there is always delay and confusion.

Because of the crowd and the confusion, much of it was blurred; and yet the impression of utter sincerity and earnestness was all the greater. Something came out of it all; the women in mourning, now chanting the episodic detail, now beating their breasts in time with a rhythmic mourning wail, "*Hussein . . . Hussein . . .*": a power of feeling, a power of remembering, a fidelity that was almost frightening.

It all blended, somehow, the gorgeous temples of Madras, jealously guarding their ancient wisdom and their ancient horror; the quiet tomb at Seringapatam so carefully tended; these women weeping for the death of Imam Hussein, almost a millennium and a half ago; and up in the Nilgiri Mountains, which tower to the westward, growing as it has always grown, the blue lotus.

"Sir Akbar Hydari, a Product of One of those Fine Old Muslim Families which Through Centuries have Contributed to the Culture of India."

days, it stood by the British; again during the late war it took the lead in proclaiming loyalty and thus doing much to quiet restlessness among the Muslims of India, and in pouring out men and money. In cash alone, Hyderabad gave over five million dollars. In War Loan subscriptions, over fifty-four million. When the Government of India was hard pressed for silver, during the financial crisis of 1918, Hyderabad lent twenty million silver bullion, pending the arrival of dollar silver from America.

States do not live on history alone. Modern Hyderabad is the scene of cultural and administrative experiments all the more absorbing to study because they are supremely successful. One would imagine that the eyes of India would be fixed upon this State of 82,679 square miles, as large as England and Scotland, with twelve and a half million people, speaking more than a dozen different languages. It is large enough and wealthy enough to provide a basis for provocative study of the potential cities of Indian rule.

But the eyes of India are not interested from that viewpoint. Outside of a comparatively small circle, few people really know anything of Hyderabad. Hindu extremists conduct a certain amount of political propaganda against the Nizam, because, to the ultra Hindu, he represents a Muslim rallying point; the only strong Musalman centre left in India. Hence, occasional scandalous articles in American papers, which are written by Hindu students with ultraviolent ideas.

Among the British, few know anything of Hyderabad, and a little of their knowledge, or their ignorance, is coloured by the Berars affair.[1]

Hyderabad's present Administration might be defined as a species of constitutional autocracy. First, His Exalted Highness the Nizam, who has absolute powers of veto over any bill or act,

[1] There has been so much misunderstanding and so much inaccuracy and bitterness over this still living issue, that I have summarised the story in the form of an appendix to this book. I wish to add that none of my information was gathered from any person connected, however distantly, with the present Administration of the State. In fact, it is so delicate that I dared not discuss it with anyone in the State, lest such a person afterwards be accused of propagandising me. My information has therefore been gathered from British sources, original and contemporary.

and whose position as Supreme Ruler of the State cannot in any way be affected by powers granted to his Council, or by Acts it may pass.

Next, the administration is divided into two branches, Legislative and Executive. The Legislative Council enacts the State laws. It is made up of a President, Vice President, and twenty-three members. The President is ex-officio President of the Executive Council. Three other members are also ex-officio, namely the Chief Justice of the High Court, the Judicial Secretary, and the Legal Adviser to His Exalted Highness.

The remaining twenty members are appointed for two years, with option of re-appointment upon the expiration of their term. Nine are government officials, and eleven non-officials. Of the latter, two must be hereditary landholders, of *jagirs* or other hereditary estates, free from encumbrances and amounting to an income of over two thousand dollars a year. These are elected by the other *jagirdars* from among themselves. Two more are selected from among themselves by the High Court Pleaders. One is elected by the Municipality of Hyderabad City. Two by the District Boards. And four are nominated by the President himself.

These nominations are also within definite limits, namely: one, from the *Paigah ilakas,* that is, from the three great landholders whose tenure is derived from assignments made to their ancestor for the maintenance of household troops; another, from the general public; and two, from among non-official members of Council whose terms are about to expire, or from experts who may be able to render special assistance with any bill before the Council.

Bills dealing with public revenues, the religion of any State subject, military questions, or foreign affairs, cannot be introduced without the permission of the President, nor can any such bill become law without the signature of the Ruler. Other bills may come into force at once, with the approval of the President. The Nizam, however, may repeal or amend them at will. The Council is, in all cases, bound to be guided by Mohammedan legal principles, the tenets of the Hindu shastras, special laws of com-

munities residing within the State, customs and usages having the force of law, and the jurisprudence of British India and other civilized countries.

How active the Council is, may be shown by the fact that in one year no less than forty-five Acts and amendments to Acts were passed, dealing with such subjects as: Poisons, Treasure Trove, Reformatories, Currency, Motor Vehicles, Co-operative Credit Societies, Census, Small Causes Court, Criminal Procedure Code, Criminal Tribes, Postal Act, etc.

Nine members compose the Executive Council, namely the President who has the Legislative Portfolio, seven members holding the Finance, Revenue, Judicial, Military, Public Works, Commerce and Industries, and Political portfolios, and one member without portfolio.

There are eleven Departmental Secretaries, covering Agriculture, Finance, Police, Statistics, Health, Education, Archæology Public Works, Co-operative Societies, Railways, and so on.

The Dominions are divided into a number of Districts; each District again into *Taluks,* and each *Taluk* contains so many villages. The *Taluks* are placed in charge of officers known as *Tahsildars,* who collect land revenue and dispense civil and criminal justice. They in turn are responsible to the Taluqdar in charge of the District. Each village has its *patel* or headman, and its *patwari* or accountant.

How does Hyderabad State recruit its officials? This rather important affair is managed roughly in three ways. A certain number of experts are brought in from outside, either direct or lent by the Government of India. Hyderabad is very *"mulki"* (which may be translated as nationalistic) and outsiders are comparatively few, including some educationalists and higher medical officers. A certain number of the highest administrative officials are appointed directly by the Nizam; that is, selected from among his subjects.

Then there is a Civil Service Training School from which officers, in due course, are taken via competitive examination. Entry into the school is mainly by nomination. Finally, subor-

dinate officials are appointed by the Departments concerned, subject to the approval of higher officials. Appointments are graded, first class, second class, etc., with fixed progressive rates of pay and pensions.

All this is rather a different picture from that of an Oriental despot, gloating among his treasures. As a matter of fact, His Exalted Highness is a very able man who, in order to keep in personal touch with the work of his State, gets up around five in the morning and works all day. His Privy Purse is separated from the State Budget altogether. Like that other enormously wealthy man, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., he has no taste for personal luxuries, and leads the simplest possible life. In addition, he is deeply religious, joining in public prayers at the Masjid every Friday.

Two unique experiments have been instituted in Hyderabad with immense success, one administrative and financial and the other educational.

The first is summed up in the words, "departmentalization of finances" for which, briefly, the argument is this: Under the usual system of yearly estimates, a department, in order to ensure sufficient finances for itself, puts up as big a howl as possible for as much as possible. Possibly it gets three quarters of what it demands, which is usually more than it might need in that particular year. But often enough it might only need half actually in that year. An ordinary private individual would just save the quarter part against the next year, but a department can't. It has to spend in order to keep up the basis for its estimates, and thus you ensure a definite amount of possibly unnecessary expenditure.

Moreover, it is also nearly impossible, under this system, for a department to plan its work for more than one fiscal year at a time. This is the method on which the Government of India and many other governments work, and it accounts for a great deal of waste where public monies are concerned.

The Hyderabad method, which has now been working for almost ten years with brilliant results, is different. The total grant for each Department is fixed for a number of years—my impression is, for three years. Within that grant, the Depart-

ment in question has a large measure of autonomy, subject to certain general restrictions and to effective audit. The Department may carry out whatever reforms it thinks necessary within this grant. In the case of proposals for capital expenditure, the Department must also provide, within its grant, for the amount of interest by which the earnings of the project fall short of the interest charges incurred by the State in financing it.

If, at the end of the year, a Department shows an increase over normal receipts, 10 per cent of this surplus is, in the case of revenue earning Departments, returned to them. The rest is, after such items as famine reserves are cared for, distributed among the nation-building departments. Fifty per cent of the accumulated amount at the credit of any given Department at the end of its contract period, is carried forward to its credit for the next period.

By this method it was hoped that Departments would be enabled to effect their own economies, in such directions as salaries and stationery especially. As regards the latter item, extra stationery allowance was immediately cut off, with a saving of more than eighty thousand dollars right away. With the ground secure under their feet, Departments could plan reforms and development schemes extending over a number of years, and, in short, get down to an efficient business management.

This scheme was set on foot about 1922. By 1924, it was evident that its success was assured, for by that time most of the Departments were laying aside substantial balances which they might spend on well thought out schemes of expansion or reform, and in spite of bad seasonal conditions and heavy extraordinary demands, surpluses in excess of normal occurred. By 1929, it had become possible to finance capital expenditures of over sixteen million dollars without raising a loan; the Reserves stood at well over fifty million; and Hyderabad scrip commanded on the money market a premium of twenty per cent. The greater part of the increase in revenue has been due to economies within Departments and to increased development made possible by departmentalization of finances, rather than to extra taxation.

But the most interesting point is that all this has not been

the work of some European expert. It is due to the farsighted vision of the Nizam, who at once saw the possibilities of the scheme, and to the genius of Sir Akbar Hydari, his Finance Member, who evolved it.

This man, Hydari, is a product of one of those fine, old merchant families which, through centuries, have helped to build up the wealth of India and contributed to its culture and civilization. He was educated by the Jesuits, at their college of St. Xavier in Bombay, where he graduated at eighteen or so and joined British service, whence he was eventually lent to Hyderabad.

Sir Akbar Hydari dispels many of one's illusions about the "lazy Orient." On working days—and he works seven days a week and eighteen hours a day, he is a whirl of activity. One watches him in sheer amazement, interviewing strings of business callers from the humblest to the most important, polishing off box after box of papers, attending meeting after meeting, dictating letters and answering telephone calls while he eats—and at the end of it all, fresh, stimulating, interested in everything that goes on in the world.

His personal life is one of the utmost simplicity and piety. A devout Muslim, he snatches somehow time to fulfil the daily obligations of prayer, and even gets up before dawn to pray. When he does secure a rare holiday, his one idea is to make up a party and go off, really at breakneck speed, to see some famous temple or artistic monument. And he sees it all. There isn't a brick, a picture, or an inscription that he will allow himself to miss, after which he manages to return with a perfectly clear idea of it all.

Meet him, and you will see a white-haired, white-bearded little man, rather stout, with keen, twinkling eyes behind his glasses. About his personal appearance, he cares less than nothing; he is perfectly capable of going off to his office with a large patch in the seat of his trousers, delighted at the idea of such economy and sincerely astonished when his wife exclaims in horror. His hobbies are art and philanthropy, but about the

latter he never talks. He just gives without allowing the outside world to know anything about the matter.

To him, also, is due the great educational experiment which is having a far-reaching effect upon pedagogical thought in India. That experiment, too, may be summed up in a few words: modern higher education in the vernacular.

It seems, after all, a perfectly sane conception. In his memorandum on the subject, Sir Akbar Hydari, dealing with the causes of educational failure in the State, pointed out the inherent defects in the system obtaining at present in India. For instance, the strain on the students' memory, the time wasted mastering the intricacies of a foreign language at the expense of the subject matter taught, the stifling of originality, and the inability of the graduates to impart knowledge to their fellow countrymen in their mother tongue, and finally the net effect in creating an unbridgeable gulf between the educated classes and the general public.

Three per cent of the people of Hyderabad are literate in English; ninety-seven per cent own as their mother tongue, either Urdu, Marathi, Telegu or Kanarese; and three per cent speak one or other of the remaining eight languages, which are really tribal dialects without any special literature.

Urdu is the official language of the State, spoken by the Court and polite society. It is, moreover, a very rich language, with an extensive literature of its own. But there were very few modern, scientific works in Urdu. Therefore, with the founding of the University, made possible by the princely generosity of His Exalted Highness the Nizam, came also the organization of a Translation Bureau under its ægis. Here, not only English, but Arabic and Persian books, as well as works in other languages, are made available to the students, in Urdu.

That the University has made good, is shown by the fact that its students are now approaching the thousand mark, and several have distinguished themselves in post-graduate work abroad.

There is no space in which to tell of the immense irrigation works, the industrial and crafts training schools, the girls'

schools, the co-operative movement, the railways, the agricultural demonstration farms, and all the other fascinating details of Hyderabad. Of course, there are drawbacks and difficulties. But the point is that the State is alive, moving ahead all the time, and, in many essential respects, far beyond anything in British India. Moving around in the city or the districts, you get a feeling of alertness and hope. People are doing business happily, going and coming. The big railway stations, at Hyderabad itself and at Secunderabad, are full of traffic. Taxis and horse vehicles, bicycles and bullock carts, are moving through the streets with policemen busily directing them.

With all its ups and downs, Hyderabad affords, today, an excellent example of what India might achieve in the way of self-government. There are no Parliamentary institutions, but instead, an effectively representative form of constitutional rule. Intrigues exist, just as they do in London, Paris, Washington, or Delhi, neither better nor worse. Perhaps in more ways than one, the future of India does lie with the Indian States.

CHAPTER NINE

THE PILGRIM'S GOAL

LIKE everything else in India, the Himalayas have many faces. Physically, they are the major part of that great barrier of mountain ranges, northwards and eastwards, which separates India from Central Asia. Central Asia is the place of unknown menace. It is the place of dark, unknown magics, whence, every now and then, sweep out over India, over the world, furious blasts of destruction. How many great civilizations, Samarkand, Baghdad, Hastinapura, has Central Asia not destroyed. How many more? You understand when you look at Taxila, at the foot of the mountains, where six wonderful cities have risen and fallen.

Behind the Himalayas lies the great plateau of Thibet, between India and China and Central Asia. From the heart of the Himalayas, went the first Buddhist missionaries into Thibet, fighting the dark, Central Asian magic. Eventually, Central Asia won. From Thibet today radiate, as those who really know are aware, currents of sheer evil. Not in Thibet can salvation be found.

But the Himalayas themselves are the pilgrim's goal, the last sojourn. Kedarnath and Amarnath, Beijnath, Riwalsar . . . Riwalsar, that curious lake, where large islands, with trees on them, drift mysteriously from side to side. To Riwalsar, come Buddhists and Brahmins, Thibetans, Bhutanese, Sikkimese, Nepaulese, Rajputs, Madrassis . . . all types and sorts in their day come to Riwalsar where, it is said, one of the great Rishis dwells; invisible, but there.

Over the passes, on the old trade route which existed for

centuries between Yarkand and Hoshiarpur in the Punjab, came the first Aryan wave, whose descendants are still in the hills. Considering that the main pass is sixteen thousand five hundred feet above sea level and closed by snow and ice in winter, it must have been a tremendous feat of endurance, an epic of daring courage. They left, those Aryans, a legacy of physical beauty to the hill people.

You see the women of Kulu and Kangra, very fair, with fine straight features, and proud bearing. Their brilliantly coloured dresses are close fitting to just below the armpits, whence they spread to the ankles in wide pleats. On a festival day when they all turn out, they look like lovely flowers in a wind of excitement and pleasure.

Pictures slide through my mind. Nightfall—when, on days of rejoicing, perhaps a god's birthday, the women come singing to your door, bearing on their heads round brass trays set with tiny lamps. You see them climbing up and down and around the hillsides, flickering lights from which come high pitched voices—like the voices of flame itself.

Or, perhaps it is time for the small gods to come down from the inner hills to worship some greater Hindu god. In one or two cases, a Rajput prince of the later conquest incarnates the greater god. From far off, east and north and south, you hear them coming, swaying in their litters, images of gold, silver, or brass. You hear the savage rhythm of the drums preceding them, the wild blare of gold and silver trumpets, something scarlet tearing the air.

Nearer and nearer they come, through the Palace gates, up to the Palace itself. On the veranda stands the Raja, a perfectly modern figure in Bond Street clothes with a wonderfully tied *safa*. The litters pause, dip, as the foremost pole bearers bend their knees, and go on.

In some parts of the hills, snakes are worshipped with offerings of milk and *ghi*. But not all snakes. Only the *Naga*, the snake kings. Between April 15 and August 15, it is wrong to kill any snake lest he be a *Naga*. On August 15 the *Naga* people go underground, to their kingdom of Patala. Underground

springs of watercourses are really roads, made by the *Naga* on their way to and from Patala.

There are different *Naga* ruling different communities, and each has his own temperamentalities. One, who lives in a remote valley, high in the mountains, has to be forcibly wakened from his winter sleep. On a certain date, therefore, his image is placed below a small window on the third story of his temple. His subjects form two factions, one to defend, the other to awaken, him. Armed with snowballs, they face each other, the attackers being forbidden to cross a certain line.

The defenders snowball the attackers, the attackers try to pitch a snowball through the window, and the fight goes on until they succeed, when the scene becomes one of rejoicing because the god has awakened.

Mandi, between Kulu and Kangra, was once the greatest iron smelting centre in India, but there is nothing of that nature now, though a large vein of manganese runs through the State. Near-by, the famous temple of Jawala Mukhi is built over an escape of natural gas. In Mandi, are situated the headworks of the Punjab Hydro Electric Power and Light scheme, which harnesses the Uhl River, and, when completed, will supply electricity to the southern half of the Punjab. It is the largest work of its kind in India, and so far has been bitterly criticized on the score of waste and poorly thought out estimates.

Roads through the Himalayas are few and far between, nor do they extend so very far. What there are, are hair raising. One has to have excellent nerves to go over the Mandi road into Kulu, or up and through Dalhousie into Chamba, or again up to Tehri Garhwal. Even with good nerves, one's stomach may go back on one. The proud record for the fifty-two miles up to Dalhousie is held by a lady who managed to be sick sixteen times. For the Kulu-Mandi Road, which in places is, like all the mountain roads, one way only, another record is held by a District Postal Officer who did it driving a motor with one axle broken. In places it looked as though he had deliberately tried to climb up the mountain side.

When roads fail, you ride in a dandy. A dandy is a coffin slung on poles. You get in, sit carefully balanced, and move no more. Your men sling the poles on their shoulders in one motion, and trot off. Again, if your nerves are good, it is delightful. Somehow they take you up long steeps, over goat tracks you would hate to walk upon, with perhaps a sheer drop of a thousand feet on one side, on and on for hours at a stretch. All goes well providing you don't meet a snake, in which case a sudden jerk may topple you out on your head.

But as you journey, the spell of the Himalayas begins to fall upon you. First the luxuriant lower slopes, the terraced tea gardens whose symmetrical clipped bushes lend them a conventionally patterned appearance. You pass through a village street. The houses on either side are of wood, elaborately carved, just as, you realize with a small, inner start, the most ancient Hindu architecture used to be. Now they seem strange and new to your Plains-trained eye.

Up through the scented pine woods, and up again to where the woods grow less and less, to where grey rock meets white snow and your ears sing and you can't quite get your breath properly.

You pass hillmen in their unbleached, wool coats, with wool skull caps, going at a dog trot; saddhus in yellow, who gaze at you unseeingly, Thibetans and Bhutanese coming down early because winter this year will be hard. Their black tents, pitched by the river, make you think of pictures of the Tartar hordes. Each has a thin strip of a pennant flying above it. Dogs, furred about the neck like small bears, rush out and bark at you. Ages of dirt have covered both men and women with a polished dark patina . . . and they smell and scratch.

But their broad Mongolian faces lighten into wide smiles. Sometimes, if you are staying in one place long enough, and they get to know you, the women come out as you pass to sing and beat great, bronze gongs because you have come.

The mountain waters are icy cold, blue and green and clear. As the snows melt in the summer heat, their waters run more and more full, bringing down with them cut logs, racing, turning,

up-ending, and sometimes jamming until men come and loosen them. Down and down they go, toward the Plains and are lost.

They grow and grow on you, these snowy heights, sometimes glittering white, sometimes translucently blue, or rose, or mauve. You are above the clouds which swirl and cling in the valleys below. Occasionally a cloud becomes queerly transparent, pale, pale grey, and you look down into a valley which seems drowned in water. You see it through clear, clear water half attractive, half terrifying.

Below the snow line, you hear the hillmen call from one side of a valley to another, long, high calls beating against the rocks and falling back. Far, far below, in the distance, a thunderstorm breaks, muttering dully. You see the flashes stabbing down, below you.

Gradually it gets you. Sitting alone, the world becomes only a series of pictures, infinitely clear and small and distinct. You can see it all, spread out in the palm of your hand. Sitting there, still and silent, you can go anywhere, over the whole world. Cities become entities, anchored to the ground, but essentially characterized. Their people are like coral insects, running about inside, building cell after cell, in response to some motor impulse started, they know not how, ending they know not where, but going on until it wears itself out.

You see Calcutta, grey and hot and damp, haunted by the ghost of innumerable sins, demanding blood and blood. Blood at Kalighat, blood in her rioting streets, blood drawn by torture in the past, bomb and knife and machine gun in the present. The West bringing civilization to the East.

You see New York, its fantastic spires touching the skies, gold and blue and silver, throwing light back to the sun. Its crowded streets in deepening shadow. And the sands of Egypt drifting up and up over obelisks and pyramids and cities and great palaces built of ageless stone. And Paris, laughing in the face of death. And the Kremlin, with the hate of the world running down its spires into the brains of the grey men and women who plan and plan to change the mind and the soul of a people.

You see it all. And there is nothing . . . nothing anywhere. No world, no you. It drops away from you. For one minute you see yourself, a small, dark speck in a field of dazzling white . . . sitting still with bent head and wide staring eyes . . . for one minute you are not in the world, you are not in you. The world is within you—another, unknown you, and you, the you, sitting there, an integral part of the world, so one with the world that you might be a tree or a rock with equal ease, nothing less, nothing more . . . all that is within this other you. This other you is Space, illimitable Space, with worlds spinning through it, each on their own note, high and long drawn like differently coloured threads weaving on and on through Space . . . Do you feel those notes? Or hear them? Or see them? It is one. Space, too, drops away from you.

From afar you return. For a moment you stand, looking at yourself. How strange, that body, huddled a little like something from which the air is slowly leaking. How strange to see, and not to feel, these faint, slow breaths. And then, an infinitesimal fraction of darkness, eyes that shut and open, and shut and open again trying to focus. How strange that you do not feel cramped and stiff. You look at your watch, at the sun . . . three hours. There is a wild exultation in your blood, but you know, suddenly, that all your emotions are differently tuned. Exultation . . . the same string, perhaps, but differently pitched . . .

You know, too, that you have reached the edge of something which must remain your secret.

After all, plenty of people go to the Himalayas just to climb or to hunt!

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

THE Indian scene faded, leaving only, clear and distinct, an Indian figure, enigmatic, silent, regarding with me dark, inscrutable eyes.

Could I, I wondered, ever know what that figure thought about; how it thought; what influences moulded and moved it? Why was it so discouragingly said to be incomprehensible?

A people's mentality, to say nothing of its fundamental being, is expressed in its culture, which in turn reacts upon and moulds it. But what culture had India? At once a phrase flashed through my mind: India is only three per cent literate.

Literacy . . . literacy I reflected, has nothing to do with culture, though culture may express itself, among other ways, in literature. If literacy were the measure of culture, then how would the West stand; that West whose historians, critics, philosophers, newspapers, etc., were almost invariably completely ignorant of or grossly misinformed about, the magnificent treasures of over half the world. Nay, more, even of the factual history of a great part of the world.

Literacy, as Plato saw, might be a means of miseducation, since the meaning of words changes from generation to generation, and what is written today may not be really understood tomorrow.

Culture is the art of living; an approach to existence even based on long experience, cultivated sensibilities, and chosen standards. Art, music, literature, even religion are expressions of culture. So is the attitude towards social relations, most strikingly expressed by women.

To comprehend something of that enigmatic figure, then, one must study something of these things; find out what they

express, what philosophy, if any, lies behind them. Even how far they touch the life of the people.

This, then, one must proceed to do. And these ensuing chapters are descriptions and analyses of some of the expressions of Indian culture, some of the things which go to make up India's attitude to life.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

THE term "Indian art" seems to connote, for one set of people, something composed of the Taj Mahal and Benares brass work. For others, especially Teutons, it is resolved in the chord *Buddhischer Plastik.*

I took the greatest care not to go and see the Taj Mahal, and most *Buddhischer Plastik* bores me intensely, so probably I know nothing of Indian art.

But a few things one can not escape form the basis of certain reflections upon the whole subject of art and beauty as Asia understands it, as the West thinks of it.

There were, for instance, the sculptures in the Peshawar Museum—and some others smuggled away from Afghanistan—*Buddischer Plastik* of the Gandharan school. The Kingdom of the Gandharas originally existed somewhere along the upper waters of the Indus, at the foot of the wall of hills which makes a natural frontier for Kashmir. Taxila, which is the Greek name for Takshashila, was one of its chief cities.

Of its art, or of any Indian art, there is very little known prior to Buddhism. And Buddhistic art, according to various critics and scholars, owes an immense debt to the Greeks.

Looking at Buddhist remains in the North of India, one is not so sure that one agrees entirely with Greek-mad critics. It is possible that the Greeks did bring to India the art of working in stone. But there is no question that Indian architecture, probably executed in wood, had definitely reached a perfection of its own long before Buddhism. There is nothing Greek in the design of a Buddhist *stupa* or a *chaitrya.*

What impressed one most about these Greco-Buddhist sculptures was their limitation. The more Greek they are, the more dead they are. One feels that the Indian craftsmen in no way responded to the naturalistic stimulus, if it could be called that, of the Greeks. The work is inherently feeble, so that one realizes perfectly why the West should have rather looked down upon Indian art, seeing perhaps only this.

Yet, through the Buddhists, who were missionaries and who wandered, missionizing, into Central Asia, into Thibet, and into China, Indian art and culture was carried into China and Japan. The missionaries took pictures and books with them, illustrating the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha, which were revelations to the inartistic Mongolian. They took a spiritual idea——

A spiritual idea. That is the secret of Indian art at its highest. That is the secret of its amazing vitality. Buddhism as a separate religion died in India. It was reabsorbed into Hinduism, or into Jainism, as far as India was concerned. Over that Gandharan country, where the Greeks had ruled, and which anyhow the Vedic Aryan had come to regard as outcast, swept the Central Asian barbarian. He destroyed the culture of Gandhara as he destroyed the culture of Samarkand and the culture of Baghdad. Then, softly, silently, India took him, molded him, absorbed him. In China the impulse given by India thinned and thinned into more and more classic, more and more conventionalized and sterile art—beautiful, but material, limited as the Chinese conception was limited—but even so, to revitalize the art of the modern West when China herself could no longer produce anything very living. When, in fact, the fabric of Chinese culture began to crumble into chaos, a process hastened, but not initiated by the hammer blow of the West.

By the time the Greeks reached India, they also had come to something like their apogee. Praxiteles and Pheidias had brought naturalism in art to the highest pitch it could reach—to perfection. In one sense this was a fatal gift to the West. The Greeks saw men as gods, the Christian idea made God into man. Both these, separate or blending, expressed in art led directly to an insistence upon form as such, upon the idea of beauty inherent

in form, in matter, as such. And finally to an insistence upon man as man—the five-pointed star.

That was all very well. It has its own beauties and its own triumphs. But it also contained within itself the seeds of a rapid decay.

It was bound to result in what might be called literary art; art as a historical record of passing events; art dominated by clericalism and literature; art as portraiture; art finally reaching, in the nineteenth century, a dead-end of photographic reproduction; art depending upon personalities for its value; art as a cult, reserved for the few, interpreted by its priests—the critics; art dissolving into chaos, and finally desperately trying to find itself as decoration, inspired by the thin, inhuman lines of mechanism. Meaningless patterns, arousing less and less response from the indifferent multitude.

India completely rejected this naturalistic ideal. For India, art was never either a commentary upon life, or an improvement upon nature. It never even became Art with a capital "A." What it was, and is still supremely, was a means of expressing philosophic ideas, spiritual teaching. As regards beauty, India says, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. It is not inherent in form or matter, as form or matter. It is a question of spiritual vision." Therefore the Indian artist tried to show two things. Geometrically he expressed certain basic truths, which are still taught in India, and in Arabia too for that matter, by means of geometrical figures only. And in so far as he drew inspiration from *rupa*—form, he attempted to pierce matter and get at the life within, the soul which is the secret of its form, and the reality within the unreality.

Knowing this, it becomes easy to understand why, in former days, the master craftsmen of India not only wore the sacred thread, but added to his name the title *"acharya,"* which means spiritual teacher.

That is how and why those marvellous temples of Southern India, like the equally lovely Islamic masjids, convey something entirely different to the Eastern and the Western minds. The Western observer sees them wholly with his senses (I hurriedly

except a few, very few but very fine commentators and interpreters). He judges them all too often on a basis of Western naturalistic technique, and that is how he contrives to fall into the error of suggesting that the Greeks inspired all that there is of Indian art, or of imagining that the Indian artist was deficient in such things as a knowledge of practical anatomy. A study of the Silpa Shastras, the book covering the principles and practice of art proves enough on this latter point. A study of Indian art in being should disprove the first.

As in Egypt, architecture is the highest manifestation of Indian art. Architecture and decoration, of which India is master, are, Spengler avers, products of the springtime of culture. If this be so, then Indian culture is one of eternal spring, since these two arts are still living there in spite of the deadening effect of an artistically barbarous rule.

There appears never to have arisen in India that distinction between fine arts and industrial arts which resulted in the West partly from the development of art as a cult, and has done so much to remove art from the living consciousness of the people. What might be called artistic organization in the East, is to this day something like the organization of the Middle Ages, when Europe really produced something living. You still have the master craftsman. For the guild, substitute the hereditary caste. In this, too, you have one of the secrets of the skill and individualism of Indian art expression.

Something of what I mean may be seen through a study of the wonderful Nataraja, the Dancing Shiva, a statue symbolizing a profound philosophical conception. Surrounded by an aura of flames, Shiva, the god of destruction, in whom is also inherent creation, dances upon a prostrate corpse. Two of his hands, hieratically posed, summon life from the air. In another, he holds an upward-darting flame, in a fourth, a small vibrant drum—exactly the drum that to this day you see used by animal charmers in India.

I do not attempt to convey anything of the emotional impact of this statue, because it is impossible. The problems of technique such a conception had to resolve, may be guessed at. What

is to the point is that there exist many Dancing Shivas in India, but, though they may and do vary considerably in execution, each one of them is alive and individual. No two are exactly and precisely alike—sheer copies.

The fame of these craftsmen spread as far as Persia, whose art is indebted to the Indian workers she imported. Something of their touch, their decorative inspiration, affected even the art of Russia.

The Arabs, themselves developing a brilliant culture beneath the life-giving touch of a great spiritual inspiration, found, as they bore the banner of Islam into India, craftsmen there who could respond artistically to the Prophet's restatement of an eternal truth. Islam found ready listeners in India, but the men who built its wonderful masjids, who were later to create the Kutb Minar, the Pearl Mosque, and those exquisite gardens which, to the Moghals, symbolized Paradise—a garden with rivers of pure water—were not only Muslims. In the service of the Absolute, Hindu and Muslim worked side by side.

They learnt, these Indian craftsmen, something more of decoration from the most beautiful writing in the world, a writing which is in itself a visual training of the highest artistic value. Delicately, cunningly, intricately, they worked their marble into the flowing, ecstatic rhythm of this Arabic script: the flowing, ecstatic rhythm of pure life, pure spirit.

Taking the basic form of the mosque, they made of it something as distinctively Indian as the most elaborately decorated Hindu temple. It bore the stamp of Islam, the spiritual inspiration of Islam; even colour was used in the form of ceramic tiles to cover the domes and the interiors, jewelled marbles as you see them, battered and raped, in Delhi—but still it was Indian. Compare a mosque in Cairo, beautiful and rare as it may be, with the Jamma Masjid of Delhi, open to the sky, and you will immediately grasp the difference. You see that those Muslims, of whom it is said today that they form an irreconcilably alien minority in Indian life, wove, in reality, straight into the intrinsic pattern of India, giving and receiving inspiration.

"Truth," says India, "which contains all knowledge, is abso-

lute and eternal. It is there, waiting only for rediscovery by the great among men." How like Plato's: All knowledge is re-collection.

Because art is used primarily by India to express aspects of Truth, more vividly and perhaps more accurately than books can hope to do, it is an integral part of Indian existence. Its place is indisputable. It means something to the people, and affects them directly. A temple, for instance, is not merely four walls and a roof, convenient for assembly. That is the last purpose it serves. Architecturally, it is directly intended as an expression of the image it houses. And that in turn is an expression of a divine attribute. You see, for instance, a column with a square base, from which rises an octagonal pillar, transformed again into a sixteen sided circular column, fluted, and culminating in a lotus capital. Each transformation means something: Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and the unfolding of the eternal.

It is this idea, this comprehension of its function and meaning, which gives to Indian art what I can only term its fourth dimensional quality. A quality, not a thing of material surfaces and planes. The fourth dimension, anyhow, is for some of us only to be apprehended through certain intellectual processes; for others through certain spiritual processes. It is perhaps the sensorily invisible plus which changes the whole relation and meaning of forms, and yet relates them more coherently. One might even call it an expansion toward infinity.

You feel this confronted by an Indian expression through art. It does not stop at what you see. It does not affect you only through your senses. It is characterized by what the Westerner calls "beginning in the middle and stopping nowhere"; without beginning or end; something made only partly visible in Transmutation.

In this lies somewhat of its strong fascination. Once you, so to speak, get it . . . it definitely changes and develops you. I have often wondered whether some of the repulsion Westerners have at times expressed for Indian art is not an instinctive fear of this, its spell.

It is, Viollet le Duc observes in one of his books, a sad fact

that the introduction of Western ideals and principles of art among the peoples of China and Japan precipitates the decadence of their own art with frightful rapidity. To a certain extent, this observation might be applied to India, certainly to within the last two decades. Though it is truer of industrial and domestic art and architecture than of temple and masjid art expression.

The British, unfortunately, reached India at a time when British art was at the lowest ebb. Those who came to India were drawn from the smuggest and most narrow-minded of all British social strata—the sincerely Protestant middle-class. They quite rightly, though perhaps instinctively, saw in Indian art an expression of an idea, what they called obscene paganism. The whys and the wherefores they never attempted to understand. Sufficient to them was the fact that it corresponded to nothing they had ever dreamed of—it was fantastic and absurd.

Therefore they dismissed it. When you see the vandalism from which Lord Curzon partially rescued the Moghal's Palace at Delhi, you begin to realize what these people were artistically, or rather, what they were not. Their contribution to Indian art has been the Public Works Department, whose efforts are an eyesore wherever they are manifested. It was not ill-will, it was fate, something inherent in the psychology of the British which one may deplore, but for which it is hardly possible to blame them, any more than one can blame a barnyard fowl for not having the voice of a Galli-Curci.

Nevertheless, the effect of their advent upon public buildings and upon the modern palaces in Indian States is nothing short of tragic. Architecturally dreadful imitations of dreadful periods, all in the wrong setting—a small Windsor Castle in Bangalore for instance, a piece of a feudal stronghold tacked on to slightly Bournemouthesque villa in Mandi, among the Himalayan snows, a complete replica of a French château in Kapurthala, the painful effort of New Delhi—what a contrast with the glories of the past.

And when it comes to interior decoration, to furnishing even . . . some of the sights in India must be seen to be believed.

One simply bursts into tears and goes away wailing for the embroidered hangings, the onyx, jade, or marble seats, the carpets and brocades of another age.

You see the bazaars filled with horrible naturalistic chromos of religious subjects, originally designed in Germany and repeated in India . . . you see the decorative art of Kashmir, wooden or *papier maché* objects, shawls, turquoise inlay work, demoralized by the European demand for something Indian which will be thoroughly European—so that it can be understood. And, above all, plenty of it, mass production in fact without variation—a thing foreign to Indian craft individualism. You see Amritsar turning out machine-made carpets, to Axminster and other Western designs. You see Indian cotton prints, whose pattern must be anything rather than the original wood block with all its strong colouring and bold design.

Buddhas made in Birmingham, Madrassis turning out Madeira embroidery, the dying race of Todas wasting time on Mission inspired doylies in aniline tints, the fine colourful woven cloth of Kohat existing only in the person of one aged survivor . . . And if all that is not sufficiently saddening, if you have more tears to spare, go to the Government Art schools in British India, and compare the awful Westernized products with Moghal and Rajput painting.

Yet, the thing that is India persists. Though thousands of craftsmen, especially those cunning workers who made Indian textiles supreme in beauty throughout the world, have been deprived of their market and thrown back upon the already crowded land, there are signs, everywhere of a renaissance, a new understanding in the West, whose own art ideals are slowly changing. In India itself the work of the Tagore family and of Havell, who inspired Abanindro Nath Tagore, relative of Mepoet, has done much for art in Bengal, and contributed toward the Indian renaissance which affects every phase of life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DUST AND DIVINITY

IN India, it is said, religion is the be all and end all of everything. The average European is often inclined to attribute to religious preoccupations many of the ills from which India suffers, and to state that if only Indians were in effect less in bondage to religion their country would progress much faster.

But if you make this statement to an Indian, whether Hindu or Muslim, he or she will gaze at you, genuinely shocked and surprised. "Without God," he will answer, "what is there? God is the most important fact—the central Reality of all existence. How, then, is it possible to ignore Him? And since this Reality is the most important thing in existence, how is it possible not to be preoccupied by it?"

Coming from the West, where mention of God as God is nowadays almost as shocking as mention of sex relations in Early Victorian days—where, in their ardent desire to be perfectly up to date, people will call God by any other name: Energy, unknown force, life-urge, and heaven knows what—one finds the frank simplicity of India and the East an immense relief. For to India, there is but one aim in life, happiness; and one way only by which happiness may be achieved, knowledge of God.

Knowledge of God, through the gods; knowledge of God through philosophy; knowledge of God through His Prophet; knowledge of God, finally, through knowledge of the Self. The roads are many, the end is the same. There are certain steps, stages if you like, common to all roads as they near the end.

One of the West's unfortunate mistakes, when it comes to

describing India, is to attempt this without any genuine knowledge or understanding of India's philosophic belief. To write, for instance, a book on India, any phase of India, leaving out religion is to put on Hamlet exclusive of the Prince of Denmark. The picture becomes meaningless. In the same way, it is also fashionable to dwell on the degradation of Hinduism, taking, for example, practices which often exist among the lowest classes or the aboriginals, to prove one's point. Since Hinduism is less an actual creed than a philosophy it has, in the course of time, absorbed many religions and to some extent affected every religion, so that it is in no way surprising to find within its net all kinds of strange and at times unhappy survivals.

Within the last one hundred and fifty years, too, ultra orthodox Brahminism has shown a definite tendency to become static, to harden and in places almost fossilize, placing definite barriers between itself and such matters as social reform. It is true that ultra orthodox Brahmins are definitely a minority group, but the fact remains. And the reason for it is to be found in the policy of religious neutrality adopted by the British.

This may seem an extraordinary statement, but it is true. Religious neutrality, when it was originally decided upon as a policy, really meant, as far as one can make out, religious toleration. This latter idea is familiar to India, and it was the secret of success during Moghal days. Only one of the Moghal Emperors, Aurangzeb, really was a bigot and a persecutor, and more than anything else, his efforts in this direction broke up the Empire, alienating much of its support among the Rajputs and other Hindu princes.

But while the Moghal Emperors were immensely tolerant to the point of having Brahmins among their ministers, they would never have permitted any nonsense in the name of religion. They had, as a Government, a definite, religious standpoint of their own. They also had respect and understanding for other beliefs. One has only to read Abul Fazl's 'Ain Akbari, one of the finest chronicles of India ever written, to realize clearly their attitude.

On the other hand, religious neutrality as finally understood

by the British, actually worked out—as Sir Alfred Lyall long ago showed—to definite a-religion. You are confronted by the amazing spectacle of a Christian Power, definitely allied to a Church, transforming itself in India to a frankly nonreligious government. Nothing could puzzle India more.

Moreover, the policy of religious neutrality is an extremely vague phrase. It might mean not holding anyone's religion against him; not forcing another form of religion upon anyone or showing any preference whatsoever. That is all to the good and in line with every modern government as well as with the thought of India itself. But what this policy has actually come to be, in practice, is toleration of any social custom or any abuse, provided that a credal case can be made out for it.

Only very occasionally has a great personage such as Bentinck dared to break through these self-imposed fetters, in the name of humanity, and forbid such things as *sati*. The essence of the great fight against child marriage, which was initiated by an Indian, Malabari, in 1889, and carried on almost wholly by Indians, was Governmental reluctance, amounting more than once to definite opposition, to "interfere with religious customs," and thus offend the small ultra orthodox Brahmin group on whose political support it might rely ordinarily.

Naturally, the weapon of "religious custom" came to be rightly looked upon as an all-powerful defence against the foreigner. The tendency of any religion, under foreign rule, is to crystallize, to harden, and to cling to its past. In modern days, "religious custom" has become a beautiful means of annoying the British. Absurd incidents occur in this connection.

A big, new railway station was being built in Amritsar. While it was in process of construction, various Hindu coolies were in the habit of performing certain devotions in the shelter of a water tank to which later the platform was to be extended. But by the time this point was reached, religious custom entered the scene. Devotions had been performed, this was holy ground. It mustn't be touched. And it wasn't.

Under the shadow of British protection, "religious custom" has become not only socially paralyzing, but politically danger-

ous. Social reform, to be effective on a wide scale, must be backed by a certain amount of legislation. This is almost impossible in India. Perhaps even this would not matter, because social reform unduly made into law also has its grave dangers. But the whole genesis of Hindu Muslim conflict lies in an adroit use of the "religious custom" idea by agitators desirous in the first place of creating disturbance.

This most ingenious plan was first put into practice about 1894, in Poona. The then anti-British conspirators had the brilliant idea of making the Ganpati festival, hitherto a purely domestic affair, into a great public demonstration which might be directed against the British. Considering, and justly, that the Muslims were loyal to the British, they decided to include these for good measure. Moreover, one thing essential to revolutionary plans is civic disturbance of any kind, on any pretext.

So bands of young men paraded through Poona, taking special pains to halt before masjids and sing insulting songs about Muslims. That the infuriated Muslims should sally forth and fall upon them is hardly surprising. The Hindu defence was "religious custom." The Muslims in turn retaliated by ostentatious slaughter of cows when the particular occasion religiously prescribed arose. By the time Mr. Montague got to India, some twenty-four or five years later, such conflicts had become numerous. And the institution of communal electorates, based on religious demarcations, has aggravated such battles to an incredible degree. They are, in fact, less matters of religious conviction than part of the game of politics, based on the policy of an outside Power, religiously neutral, supposedly holding the balance, but actually affected by popular clamour, especially when connected with the word "religion." You now have in India a class of men who are professional Muslims, professional Hindus, just as in America we have had the professional war veteran, and the professional Southerner.

The proof of this is to be found in the fact that such disturbances occur very rarely in Indian States, and then only when excited by agitators from British India, and, moreover, that there they are easily quelled. In a Hindu State, you will find

the ruler providing money for a Muslim masjid, and in a Muslim State you will equally find State contribution towards a Hindu temple.

There are shrines in India frequented equally by Muslims and Hindus, and a great religious teacher, no matter what his particular creed may have been, is revered and followed by people of all classes and creeds.

These, then, are some of the more superficial aspects of religion in India. Before describing the inner side of India's spiritual life, it might be well to examine for a moment the differences and accordances of the three great creeds existing in India today. I am going to include Jainism and Sikhism also, as offshoots of Hinduism emphasizing special aspects. That leaves Islam, Hinduism, Christianity.

The latter, as a creed, hardly counts. Indirectly, the influence of what might be called practical missionizing has been good—that is, in so far as Christianity has expressed itself in the form of medical help, education, etc. In this direction, the Salvation Army deserves the highest praise for its really wonderful work in settling tribes of wandering criminals. Where education is concerned, the Roman Catholics come easily to the fore, and, in fact, Roman Catholicism is the only form of Christianity which has, in Goa for instance, had any lasting effect and which does not carry with it a social stigma. The Goanese are largely Eurasians, mixed Portuguese and Indian, who have made for themselves a definite and worthy place in the social structure of the country. Convent schools meet a real need among the women of India, because they are pardah, and because on the whole the nuns are more refined, possibly of a somewhat better class than the average Protestant missionary, and they do not insist so much upon proselytizing.

Islam and Hinduism have this much in common philosophically: both aver the ultimate unity of God, and both, in their highest expression, conceive of God as Absolute, Unknowable as far as ordinary human intelligence is concerned, All Powerful, etc.; both acknowledge, in principle, the existence of a divine immortal essence in man; both, again, in their highest expression,

look upon knowledge as the means of reaching God; both see everything proceeding from God, dependent therefore upon God, and returning to him; both are therefore evolutionary in their nature.

Islam is a missionary religion, Hinduism is not. But Islam forbids forced conversion, and does not necessarily view all non-Muslims as damned. According to the Prophet, or rather to the Koran, God raises up in each nation a teacher to restate eternal truths. The Prophet is last in the order of succession, and completes—therefore superseding—all former teachings. He emphasizes the Unity of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and discards all symbolization in the shape of idols and gods which are likely to obscure the One, Supreme God and eventually to blot Him from daily consciousness.

Both of these conceptions differ profoundly and basically from Christianity. Christianity sees God as a mysterious Trinity. In Hinduism the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva is merely a personification of three, primary attributes. Islam does not personify these, nor does it deal with the point for popular use, again for fear of clouding the issue. The doctrine of atonement by God expressed as a man, finds no parallel in either of the other two philosophies. It seems ridiculous, if not actually blasphemous, to the educated Muslim or Hindu, because there is in these religions a conception of original perfection, but not one of original sin.

While one book could hardly contain all the details of Hinduism, there are certain basic ideas upon which the whole system is built, and which are often misinterpreted in the West.

First, as I have remarked above, you have the integrity of the Absolute God: one, unknowable, indescribable.

Next, comes the world, all worlds, produced from God, by God, and held in equilibrium by the three *gunas* or forces symbolized in Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, acting upon *Prakriti,* which is matter, or rather manifestation. *Prakriti* becomes manifest through the power of *Shakti,* which is symbolized as the female principle, which is duality, the intervening step, which is energy. In other words, you get matter as an expression of

energy determined by certain interplays, relations, etc., as far as its form is concerned.

So you come into the world of form, which is the world of cause and effect. It is a world of scale, lowest and highest, in which the human being's position is determined ultimately by his self-awareness. In other words, the human being is controlled by circumstance, by form, by the iron laws of cause and effect until he can reach that degree of comprehension which, making him their master, frees him from them.

Karma is the law of cause and effect. In principle Islam acknowledges karma in those passages of the *Koran* where it is stated that according to what a man does, so he eventually receives. If he does good for the sake of worldly rewards, he will so be rewarded, if he does evil, he will so be rewarded, except and unless he knows how to bring other laws to bear. It is, of course, a perfectly logical idea, and an expression of the Eastern passion for absolute justice and reason.

All this brings one, logically, to the laws of dharma. Dharma is the essence of Hinduism in its practical application to existence. To define it in one word is almost impossible. Duty does not quite express it. Dharma may be called the principles of relation which hold the world together. It can, applied to the individual, mean the principles of right living, that is, not only the harmonization of an individual with his environment, but his fulfilment and his expression through his particular form—perfection in his particular state of being.

His state of being at a given period is a result of evolution, of cause and effect, progressing through a number of changing forms. Thus, Hinduism solves the question of self-development not by attempting to express individuality in every direction at once, in one life, which makes for diffusion, but by successive fulfilment of potentialities through many lives, until you work them out and arrive at the immutable essence.

What is called Oriental fatalism, the meaning of the phrase: "Destiny is written on your forehead," is really the conception of actions as a result of character acting upon and acted upon by environment. Dharma properly performed, harmonizes these.

For example, the dharma of a peasant is perfection as a peasant. The dharma of a king is perfection along the lines of a king. For either of them to abandon his own dharma, in an attempt to take on another's, is a sin only in the sense that it is bound to result in imperfection.

The idea of dharma expresses itself socially, as it were, in the idea of caste. Caste is an integral feature of Hinduism. A man is born in a certain station of life. His business is to fulfil himself within that station which has its own dharma. In one sense, the sense of outward form, caste is a limitation. But it also carries with it definite rights and privileges. That is where the West, judging caste, is apt to go astray, because, in the West, to be low-born and poor, has always meant losing rights and privileges. The serf of the Middle Ages had no rights at all. The great uprising of the industrial age in the West has been based on a fight, by the under dog, for rights he could not obtain except by force. But, even so, the idea of every class having its own rights has not yet penetrated the Western consciousness, as you may see in Soviet Russia, where all that has happened is merely to stand the social structure on its head, so to speak, and give the proletariat all rights at the expense of every other class.

Caste is the secret of that amazing stability which is characteristic of the Indian social structure. It is the strength of Hinduism. Naturally, it can be abused. The moment a Brahmin treats a sweeper cruelly because he is a sweeper, he departs from his Brahminhood. He becomes a usurper and a social danger. And in due course, he will have to pay for this mistake. Because men are imperfect, and because power is a deadly intoxicant, such abuses may and do occur, but they are not inherent in the institution—they are contrary to its principles, though they may be inherent in the make-up of the individual.

Caste in itself is also a protection for the individual, because it permits of group action. The reason why a Hindu dreads being outcaste is analogous to the reason why, in England say, a worker would dread being thrown out of his trade union. In

India, the consequences extend somewhat further; they affect the possibilities of marriage for his children, of his own burial, and so forth. Moreover, caste is hereditary. This is another point which afflicts the Western mind.

That it should do so is because, under the influence of Christianity, the West has come to disconnect the human form from the rest of nature. It does not, for instance, see the form of man existing merely as a manifestation of matter, precisely as the form of trees or rocks. The idea of the soul, the spiritual essence, is in the West inextricably mixed with its material form —hence you have the theory of bodily resurrection at some future date. It implies a clinging to one form.

India, on the other hand, sees form as a changing expression, an illusion. There can be no such thing as bodily resurrection according to this conception. The spiritual essence goes on experiencing through many forms. And the form of man is just as much a part of material nature as the form of trees—in substance the same, in expression different.

Trees reproduce themselves according to certain principles of hereditary variation, gradually, perhaps, evolving. Sometimes, it is just possible, there may for some reason be an apparently sudden and violent departure from the stream, which may start a new variation. Men do the same thing, says India, and carries this principle again to its logical conclusion in hereditary caste. Cobbler or oak, Brahmin or banyan, these are forms reproducing themselves as forms. The spiritual essence is not confined to form except for a period of experience, determined again by the laws of cause and effect. Therefore, the idea of hereditary caste does not afflict the Indian mind with the sense of bondage that it conveys to the Westerner.

Moreover, it must be remembered that theories are always more rigid, more extreme, than practice. Actually, there does go on a very gradual seepage from caste to caste. This seepage has produced the innumerable subcastes and complications of caste which now exist. It is never acknowledged, any more than America ever acknowledges, or than most Americans are ever

conscious of, the seepage of negro into white. Nobody tells. But it happens imperceptibly. The proof lies in physical characteristics which are unmistakable.

One more variation of caste, which is comparatively modern, must be noted. That is caste as trade union. Economic pressure has forced, for instance, certain Brahmins into fields of employment which formerly were not within the Brahmin idea. These, then, make other subcastes, strictly speaking Brahmin only in name and in such social matters as eating, marriage, etc.

A great advantage of this system is that it permits of the existence of all groups as entities, retaining their own individual characteristics while fitting into a coherent, social mosaic. The process that we call, as applied to our own social structure, "Americanization" has never existed in India. It would be looked upon with some horror as an infringement of rights, and more than that, of dharma. As long as Hinduism exists, India will never standardize, and its tremendous cultural richness is a consequence of this lack of standardization plus a coherent, social pattern.

According to Hinduism, the world as a whole goes through a series of cycles, *yugas,* for each one of which a particular aspect of religious teaching is especially suited. For this age, the *Kalayuga,* that teaching is to be found in the Tantra Shastras.

Again it is necessary to qualify. There are thousands of different aspects of Hinduism, all working, so to speak, in India. There are various "reform" movements, with some of which the West is more familiar than with Hinduism proper. You have, for instance, the "back to the *Vedas*" group, largely due to the work of Ramakrishna, and developed, as Vedanta, by Vivekananda. Vivekananda's teachings, really expounded first in the West and greatly affected by Westernism, are what is generally understood here by Hinduism. They have had some success in India, especially among somewhat Westernized Bengalis and among certain political groups in Bengal itself. But numbers of Indians were deeply shocked by Vivekananda, and it is commonly said in India that he died of poison, administered by out-

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE GREATEST ADVENTURE

PERHAPS the most striking difference between East and West lies in their respective attitudes toward the daring adventurer who tries to pierce through all limitations, all perceptions, to a definite comprehension, in this life, of ultimate reality.

The social structure of the West, which reflects after all the true level of Western thought, definitely hampers, where it does not actually forbid, such an effort, unless you have a private income, and don't mind being called a harmless lunatic, or unless you can screen yourself behind the paraphernalia of "science" or "philosophy."

India regards this attempt as the highest and finest aim of existence, not, in its serious final stages, possible for everybody and anybody at one time. But an aim to be so reverenced that the man who undertakes this, the greatest adventure, is cared for as far as his limited physical needs go by anybody and everybody. No one refuses him respect, shelter, food, or clothing. He does not even have to ask. Although there may be hundreds of impostors, India instinctively realizes that it is fully worth while putting up with these for the sake of those who are genuine.

This freedom is more priceless than any political institution. Because of this, India has been able to arrive at spiritual knowledge and strength unequalled anywhere in the world. Were India ever to be so influenced by superficial Western ideas as to institute foolish vagrancy laws and organized charity distribution societies, it would lose living torches of spiritual wisdom

and knowledge, and perhaps even sink to levels of materialistic barbarism.

These spiritual adventurers of India are the yogis, saddhus, faqirs, holy men and women of all creeds and descriptions, who are sometimes described by Western observers as an "economic burden," "one of the factors of Indian poverty," and so on. They have existed in India since the earliest days of history, and through all its magnificent and wealthy civilization they have kept alive in India the thought of another beauty, a more wonderful existence, of which all this is but a lovely veil.

Saddhu and faqir are really equivalents. The first is Hindu, the second Muslim. Generic terms, they cover widely differing varieties of asceticism, training, effort. Among the saddhus you find Jains, Shaivites, Vaishnavites, all sects and groups. Among the faqirs, various orders of dervishes, and other types of Sufis. You see them in all stages—the wild-eyed, ash-smeared Tantrik who dwells on or close to the burning ghats; the drugged fanatic; the black robed, the yellow robed, the white robed; the Jain whose mouth is covered by a thin pad of cloth lest by any chance he swallow some small living creature; the man who attempts control of his body by means of fearful tortures; the faqir in a robe entirely of patches; the saddhu who goes naked as on the day he was born—all, all attempting the road to the infinite.

Some are sheer impostors, some are dangerous criminals, some are political agitators in disguise, some are secret service agents in the pay of the British Government, some are just beggars, a certain number are even spiritually dangerous—but thousands are absolutely genuine even if they have not progressed so very far.

A good deal of Western misunderstanding has been caused by a certain confusion of their fundamental ideals with those of the Christian who rejects the world in order to become a monk or a mendicant friar. Certain types of Buddhist monks do closely approximate to the Christian, as regards their basic thought. But the saddhu does not. He starts from quite another point of departure.

The Christian monk rejects this world in the hope of another.

"Yogis are not Among the Men who Stick Knives Through Their Cheeks or do Horrifying Tricks."

showing definite signs of spiritual renascence, there are no yogis living in the West.

In recent times, two Europeans in India really arrived at the genuine thing, and are recognized by Indians, not necessarily as full yogis, but as those having knowledge. One, Charles Russett, was for years a saddhu, and before he died, in 1928, became *mahant,* or incumbent of the famous Jakko Temple in Simla. The other, a woman whose name is almost unknown to the West, is still living.

Renunciation is a necessary preliminary. "But," said the guru, when I spoke of the longing for a saddhu's life, "it is not necessary to wear a yellow robe, in order to be a saddhu. All that is needed is the change of attitude. You may move through the world, truly a saddhu in your heart."

For the point of renunciation, the reason why the saddhu sheds everything, his name, his past, his family, his home, his property, all that he has, is to discard everything that may bind him to a form world. It is both a change of attitude from an egocentric to a universal consciousness, and an impersonal regard of the form he, at the moment, uses for his expression, what is generally known as his personality.

What an immense difference this idea has made in all Indian approaches to existence. That outward personality, which the West is always trying to build up, is for him just as illusory, as temporary, as everything else. That is why in the past it never occurred very strongly to India that portraiture, either in sculpture or painting, had much importance. You find very little historical portraiture of the outward form in India except for a few, Moghal period works. Everything goes to typify a soul idea.

The next qualification, is a burning desire for reality, for liberation. It is this desire, in itself a form of purification since it must in the end consume all others, that leads you to the guru.

"The guru," says the Bhagavad Gîta, "appears to you." This is literally true. He does not come to find you. He does not ask you to come to him. On the contrary, the would-be chela, or pupil, must have certain qualifications, such as good birth, purity of soul, capacity for enjoyment, desire for liberation. What hap-

pens is that you, seeking, recognize the guru. Recognition is in itself a stage of spiritual progress, in itself what is called a mystical experience. And then perhaps after a period of probation, sometimes a year, he may accept and initiate you as his pupil.

Initiation by the guru includes the giving of a secret *mantra* to the chela. It may never be repeated to anyone else, for it is suited only to the needs of that individual, and may be dangerous to others.

A *mantra* is a utilization of the essential powers, or *shakti,* of sound. It is made up of certain letters, arranged in a definite sequence of sounds, which they represent. It has no connection with prayer or self-dedication. Its words or letters may have no apparent meaning. It must be pronounced and intoned in the correct manner, and, since the force is connected so closely with the sound, it can never be translated.

Among the Muslims you find the same idea regarding *Koran Sharif,* intoned according to defined principles, in the original Arabic. All of it, and certain *suras* in especial, has a *mantrik* quality and force.

Acceptance of the chela by the guru, moreover, which is part of his initiation, involves the establishment of a peculiar spiritual relationship, which is considered to be an absolute necessity in order to render active certain forces within the chela, which are essential to his further development. The guru constitutes a living link. On this is based the phrase: "Guru is God."

The same conception exists in Islamic mysticism. Among the Eastern Ismailis—who used to be known in the West as the "Assassins," and who are known in India as the *Khojas*—you find it corrupted into the practical assumption of incarnate Godhood in the person of the head of the sect—so that His Highness the Aga Khan becomes, to all intents and purposes, God on earth. A similar corruption of a true idea is found in the definition of the Pope as Vicar of Christ, speaking ex-cathedra, with what amounts to divine authority in matters of faith and the power to bind or to loose. And so you arrive at the Catholic spiritual director, literally the keeper of his penitent's conscience, with power to pardon or eternally to condemn.

ana, or place of trance. There are seven small, hollow domes, six of which are closed and one open, wherein a lamp burns always. In the six, Bhartrihari has already done *samadhi.* One day he will come to the seventh.

Samadhi is a trance-like state of mystic ecstasy into which the yogi may go, and which may last for an indefinite time. During *samadhi* his body remains as he left it, to be resumed when he wishes, provided it is not interfered with. For this purpose, he usually retires to some remote cave in the jungle or in the Himalayas. Or perhaps he may even instruct his chela to bury him in the proper yogic position and with proper precautions. Edwardes, in his account of a visit to the court of Ranjit Singh, declares that he saw such a phenomenon.

Quite recently also, to be exact, in the latter part of 1929, some workmen were ordered to remove a small ruined temple in Limbdi State. While working upon the foundations, they discovered under them, the body of a man, in yogic posture according to known precepts, perfectly preserved. He looked as if he had been placed there recently—though in India dead bodies do not last for twenty-four hours. Exposure to air did not affect him. No one could say when the body might have been placed there, since the temple had not been touched within living memory. Eventually, since it seemed to be the body of a yogi in *samadhi,* it was replaced and the temple rebuilt.

According to Persian Shiah belief, the twelfth Imam similarly disappeared into a cave, whence, as the Mahdi, he will one day reappear. One may also hear in India a theory concerning the yogic powers of the first kings of Egypt who were, it is said, trained in India, and brought to Egypt all its wisdom. Because some of these went into *samadhi,* the idea of kingship and yogiship became connected, and it was thought that such men did not die. Following kings had themselves embalmed and placed in something approximating the yogic posture in caves etc., to give the impression of indestructibility. Later, even this was forgotten and the position changed, while embalming spread gradually to all classes.

This is just a theory, but it is possible that the idea of bodily resurrection is a confused memory of something like *samadhi*.

During *samadhi,* a yogi may appear miles away from the place where his body reposes.

Yogis are not, in the ordinary sense, subject to death. They discard their bodies if they wish, and choose others. To the yogi, his body is as a glove or any garment, to be utilized just like any other form.

Interesting as such powers may be, however, they are not really very important. The whole attitude towards such *siddhi* was once beautifully summed up for me by a *Sufi*. "Suppose," he said, "a man goes on a long and arduous journey to visit a great king. As he nears the palace, he comes to beautiful gardens filled with wondrous flowers. But suppose he allows himself to be so absorbed by the flowers that he entirely forgets the purpose of his journey. . . ."

The path of yoga, as it is taught in India, is by no means a popular part-time occupation. It has no connection with astrology, numerology, white lodges, pink lodges, crystal-rod initiations, solar, lunar, stellar initiations and similar flummeries. Yogis, or spiritual teachers, are not among the men who stick knives through their cheeks, throats, or bodies, shoot their eyeballs out on their cheeks, and do other horrifying tricks. You may see these any time, together with all the other varieties of jugglers in which India specializes.

Nor will you find a genuine guru with many *shishyas*. He may have hundreds of devotees to whom he freely gives advice and help, but of accepted pupils, very few. Such men do not take money for their teaching, nor do they preach from pulpits, run campaigns for churches, institutions, and so on. You do not even find them living together in monasteries.

Yoga is a deadly serious business, requiring more courage, more intelligence, more will-power, and even more solid common sense than most of us possess. There is more to it than vague speculation or iridescent dreams. Not less but more, hard, daily grind; not less but, at times, more discouragement and flatness; not less but more, study, more patience, more self-control. Self-

hypnotization, self-suggestion, a belief that all's right with the world and everything is perfectly lovely—is not yoga. Modesty, purity, complete and unostentatious sincerity, that inward loveliness which perfumes the whole being—that is something of yoga. Nothing is more quickly felt, more remarkable, than the intense sweetness, the touching simplicity of the true yogi.

Something of what it all means is summed up in that rather misunderstood phrase of Christ's, indicating himself as guru to the rich young man: "Give up all—and follow me."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SOUNDLESS EVER SOUNDING

BRILLIANT moonlight . . . such moonlight as only India knows, when every tree, every rock, every vista is marvellously transformed into unearthly beauty . . . something that touches you with a feeling of tears, mingled with an indescribable exaltation.

Nothing moves. One would imagine oneself caught and held in some magical net of dreams, standing there on the veranda, looking up at the dark blue sky where great stars swing, brilliant even in the brilliant moonlight.

From within, comes the soft throbbing of the *tabla,* those little drums India plays with the hands, from which India draws fantastic, exciting rhythms . . . slackening, beating, quickening again and rising into a wild crescendo as the voice it accompanies flings a note like a ball into the air, and leaves it there suspended. . . .

It is not, that voice, like anything the West would recognize. There are no full, round notes, no mellow, golden phrases . . . this voice is quite differently produced, almost, at first hearing, harsh, with that Spanish quality of harshness which so directly affects the nerves and the emotions.

A man singing a *ghazzal,* a love song in Urdu. From the grave speaks the lover's voice, as his beloved passes near. "My heart is of crystal, and already it has cracked. Tread lightly, oh tread lightly, beloved, lest altogether you should shiver it."

How soft the *tabla,* weaving an intricate rhythm as the voice stops in the middle of a line, as though to let some unheard voice continue. And begins afresh with the omitted last words.

The music goes on and on . . . it has been going on since nine, and it is now past one in the morning. A thin curtain separates us, the women, from the silent audience of men, sitting around the musicians. Shoeless, we rise silently and wander about; going into a nearby room to get food or a drink, roaming out on to the veranda where the heavy jasmine scent adds its enchantment to the enchantment of the moon.

Now the rhythm changes, subtly, delicately—the voice is singing Iqbal's lament over Sicily—that forgotten Sicily of the Arabs:

Once thou wast the cradle of civilisation of that people
The fire of whose glance was world burning beauty . . .

The nightingale of Shiraz wailed over Baghdad,
And Dagh wept tears of blood over Delhi . . .

When the heavens scattered all the wealth of Granada to the winds
The sorrowful heart of Ibn-i-Badrun cried out . . .

The dirge of thy ruin was to fall to my lot.
It was my lot to suffer this agony, and to make others suffer . . .

Clear and melancholy it floats through the night, this great poem of the greatest living Indian poet. Through it all the *tabla* and the *sitar* weave a melody of their own, winding, twisting, as inevitable, as beautiful and varied as the mind making music patterns through the trees.

You cannot, if you wish to understand anything of Indian music, do as you do in the West, proceed to a concert hall and hear a few pieces executed, however marvellously, by a great orchestra. You cannot even hope to realize anything by getting a professional singer or so and listening to a couple of songs screamed at the top of a powerful voice. The whole idea of music, as India knows it, is opposed to such methods.

The Indian musician does not play from a set score, undeviatingly followed. The classical Hindu *ragini* are in the nature of modes and themes, upon which the musician embroiders for as long as he wishes. Something of the astonishing fertility of

musical imagination in India may be gathered from a remark in an old Sanscrit MS. dealing with the subject, where the writer states that he has invented 1,250 variations of one seven-note theme and "God himself could not invent 1,251".

An immense number of these themes exist, intended for certain periods of the day, certain days of the week, certain seasons of the year. They should never be played at any but the proper time. Why this should be so involves touching on the Indian philosophy of sound.

Sound—*shabda*—is the manifestation of what might be called the principle of pure intelligence working upon and through matter. In another sense it is the creator of form and the animating principle of form. The idea resembles that of the Greek Logos —the word of creation. Sound is also the quality of inherent property—in Sanscrit the *guna*—of *akasha* or ethereal space. There are two forms of sound, unlettered and lettered, the latter proceeding from the former.

Everything has its sound, unlettered, which is the subtle aspect of its vital principle. The sounds we hear are but notes caught at random, with vast spaces, as it were, between them in which beyond our hearing is their continuity. In this sense you think of existence, in terms of sound, as a tremendous, continuous pattern, of which tiny fragments are perceptible, just as the light of the sun strikes a dewdrop among leaves.

Sound is *mantra,* force or energy; name is form, the grosser aspect of the principle.

Indian music of the classical type represents something near the essence of existence at a particular moment. That, really, is its theme, and so it cannot be played at any moment when its sounds would clash with the unheard sound of life. If you accept the philosophical Indian conception of sound existing as a subtle essence and a property of everything including the life principle of the individual, then, too, you can begin to understand something of the way Indian music is designed to affect the hearers.

There is nothing emphatic about such music, in the sense of stress upon one note at the expense of others. You do not, as it were, leap from sound to sound, leaving what the Indians call

"holes between". It is a scale of finer intervals which the untrained Western ear often has some difficulty in hearing properly, and progression from note to note ripples, as it were, continuously up and down. The continuity of sound, what in physics one might call its density, is further enhanced by the fact that, in the really classical instruments, such as the *bina* and *sitar,* beneath the strings actually touched a number of others are placed to afford resonance.

The immediate effect is not as striking as Western music, but it is in the end, far more insidiously intoxicating. Between the two types of music, the difference is almost like that which exists between getting drunk on spirits and being drugged. The parallel even continues to this point, that once you have really become attuned to Indian music, Western music, beautiful as it may be, becomes too obvious and too tiring for you. You feel your ear banged, so to speak, by successive blows of sound whose changes are too great for your immediate adjustment.

At first, Indian music may sound a trifle monotonous, but after an hour or so, you find yourself enspelled. The pattern of it weaves and weaves, around you, over you, through you, intensifying your mood, your emotion, and perhaps something deeper even than mood and emotion, until you, yourself, are part of that musical pattern. Actually, of course, you do communicate something to the musician; this is so recognized by the players that one often hears them say, referring to a European group of listeners, "We could not play well, because they felt nothing, and therefore we remained cold."

Such music is never tiring. Undoubtedly, your own response is facilitated by the fact that physically you are not uncomfortable. Instead of sitting up straight on chairs, with glaring lights flashing in between pieces, or even in a drawing room with polite conversation required of you, you curl up comfortably amongst cushions, either on the floor or on the *takht* a sort of wide, mattressed divan. Your shoes off, your clothing loose and flowing, you can abandon yourself without the least reminder from an annoyed or outraged body, to a purely psychic state.

It is not necessary to talk, for India wonderfully knows the

value of silence. Sleep, if you wish, or half sleep with the music vibrating in you—eat, drink, or smoke—the experience goes on, heightening to a point far beyond normal intensity. Its "wholeness", towards which the conditions under which you hear it also contribute, make it infinitely satisfying.

Between music and poetry a very close connection exists in India—really closer than in the West because, on the one hand, poetry is never spoken naturalistically, but always chanted. On the other hand, where songs are concerned, their words are all-important. You will never find an Indian at all interested in a trivially worded song, nor in one whose music is allowed to overpower the meaning. This, again, is one of the difficulties a Westerner has to face when listening to Indian singing. If you don't know what it is all about, you miss half or more than half, of its beauty.

Of poetry it is said that in the end it "sings itself"—the words are but a sheath for its essential, finer sound.

Undoubtedly, India is deeply affected by song and poetry. It is a singing country, much of whose emotion and feeling is expressed in this way. Through its songs and poetry, you learn much of history, of political feeling, and even religious teaching. Bhartrihari's religious teaching, for instance, is in Sanscrit verse; the Ramayana is largely epic poetry; and also much of the *Mahabharata;* the *Rig Veda* of course is made up of hymns and poetry.

Among the Muslims, especially of the Shia sect, during *Moharram,* one of the most affecting occurrences of that month of mourning is the singing of *marsias. Marsias* are songs detailing every incident of the tragedy of Kerbela, when the Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet, was treacherously massacred together with almost all the male members of his family, at the instigation of his enemy, Muawwia. Every detail of that harrowing event is recorded in verse sung without instrumental accompaniment, some of which rises to heights of pathos.

Very often four or five men come to your house to sing these, one of whom will sing the words, while the rest produce a most lovely and unusual choral accompaniment, wordless. Just how

this is produced is difficult to describe, because I have never heard anything quite like it, and at first it is not easy to recognize sounds coming from a human throat. Meanwhile, the hearers, deeply affected, listen with tears streaming down their faces and perfectly genuine grief.

The religious songs made by Kabir, the weaver saint, are known and sung all over Northern India. *Bande Mataram,* the Hindu nationalist song, at one time so roused the people that it was proscribed by the British, though now it is taught in every Hindu school, even those under government supervision.

Among the Musalmans, certain modern poets have contributed amazingly towards the awakening of their community. Few songs or poems have ever so electrified a people as much as Hali's *Musadda* stirred the Muslims of India, for instance.

Hali was one of the group of very brilliant men who surrounded Sir Syed Ahmad Khan when that great Muslim began his work of reforming Muslim education, and arousing his people to a fresh sense of dignity and a desire to resume their proper place in the life of India. From the fall of Delhi on, the downward trend of the Musalman community had been accelerated both by its own rigid pride and by a numbing sense of defeat and loss.

There was, in fact, almost no one to extend a helping hand. The British regarded them with some suspicion, and were not anxious to encourage indigenous educational institutions, so that what schools they had were almost always religious—in the sectarian sense—bigoted and narrow, without a single modern touch. There is, after all, a long record of treachery and betrayal at the hands of the Christians in Islamic history, and while the Muslims never could, and never would, unless exasperated beyond all bounds, attempt to rise against the conqueror, they certainly did not, in general, wish to enter his service. Nor was there very much room for them in government service.

Used to a rather lavish style of living, affected in every way by the new régime, the landholders began to fall into the hands of the money-lenders, and gradually the whole community, with few exceptions, had sunk into a condition of apathy and ignorance.

Hali, in his powerful poem, describes their condition movingly: The religion which once saved the world from polytheism.

Now has for its sole saviour, God.
That religion which was reared in the lap of statesmen
Is now ruled by the sword of menials and illiterates.

. . . . . .

Your religion is still pure at its source
But those who profess it have neither water, nor purity.
The learned are without intelligence; the illiterate are savages;
There is neither obedience in the young, nor affection in the old;
No love between lovers; no loyalty between friends;
Neither skill, superiority, honour, nor wealth;
Only religion remains—without leaves or fruit.

. . . . . .

When there was hope, there was also fear and despair.
Now, long since from our hearts, fear and despair have gone.

. . . . . .

We cannot complain of the world, nor of fate,
These days we have seen because of our own neglect.

. . . . . .

For the struggle of today, we need armour;
But our friends still wear the same old sheets over their shoulders.

. . . . . .

To that place where water cannot be obtained without payment
The entire caravan has journeyed—emptyhanded.
We come to buy our necessities with obsolete coins,
When since long past, a new currency has been circulating in the city. . . ."

The poem goes on to lay the blame for all sins on the Muslims themselves, suggesting that to get God's help it is necessary to make an attempt to help oneself—finishes on a curious note of mock despair and cynicism.

Sung and recited everywhere in India, this poem really inspired the renascence among the Muslims, and the beginning of nationalism as far as they were concerned. It also marked an epoch in poetry itself, because it was written in a comparatively easy, direct Urdu which anybody could understand. Literary

Urdu is very much more difficult than the colloquial variety, and poetry of the more classical school, polished and beautiful as it is, presents many difficulties on account of its extreme allusiveness and the prevalence of difficult Arabic and Persian words in the language.

Ghaleb, for instance, who is in some ways a greater poet than Hali, never affected the mass of the people as vividly, because to understand him requires an education in Urdu comparable to a college degree. One of his poems for instance, describing the poet's need for an emotional stimulus such as love, presents in every couplet, imagery and phrases like this:

It is long since I have invited the eyelashes (wept bitterly)
I am careful in everything, and so my breath is stopping (my inspiration is drying up)
How many years since I have torn my collar (fallen in love)
Now my breath again rains sparks of fire (desire awakens in me)
Again love has come to enquire after the wounds of my heart;
With a hundred thousand arrangements of the salt cellar (pouring salt into my wounds)
Again the pen of my eyelashes is filling up with the blood of my heart
And the pen would paint flowers on the skirt (make love)

and so on.

Following Hali, came Akbar, who, also writing in a more popular style of Urdu, satirized the follies and weakness of modern life, and is one of the most appreciated of poets.

Their successor is Sir Muhammad Iqbal who deserves to be considered as the greatest living Indian poet, not excepting Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's poetry is better known to the West because in many ways it is easier to translate from the Bengali. It is not quite as deeply Eastern as that of Iqbal, and, moreover, the poet himself is better known to the West and has always had more Western contacts. Tagore and his family have contributed greatly to the revival of Indian culture, and have every right to recognition, but I rather doubt whether, at any time, Tagore has meant so much to all classes and all parts of India as Iqbal does, while certainly the depth and quality of his philosophic thought never reaches that of Iqbal.

Iqbal was still a college student when he flashed into popularity as a poet. Stories are told of him, in his young days, standing on a dais singing his poems to an audience so frantic with enthusiasm that at times the poet had to be carried away, almost fainting with exhaustion.

Later, he graduated from Cambridge and spent some time studying in Munich and Paris. This experience had a very great effect on him. On the one hand, he appreciated the stimulating effect of democracy and nationality; on the other, he observed the sordid consequences of materialism, and, totally disillusioned, estimated the debasement of character ensuing from Western civilization. This provoked a prophetic poem, on his return, wherein he reminds his own people of their great destiny, and foretells the inevitable consequences of materialism and bad faith:

The time of unveiling has come,
The Beloved will be seen by all,
That secret which was veiled by silence
Shall become manifest.

. . . . . .

The silence of Mecca has proclaimed to expectant ears, at last
The compact made with the desert dwellers shall once more be strengthened.
The Lion who came out of the wilderness, and upset the empire of Rome,
I hear from angels that once more he shall awaken.
O dwellers of western lands, God's world is not a shop,
That which you considered good coin, shall prove of little worth,
Your civilisation will commit suicide with its own dagger,
A nest built on a slender branch cannot last.

His Persian poem, *Asrar-i-Khoda,* the *Secrets of the Self,* which has been translated into English by Dr. Nicholson, the translator of the *Mathnawi* of Jellal uddin Rumi, again took young India by storm, as a magnificent presentation of dynamic philosophy. His song, *Of All the World, Our India Is the Best* —is as much of a national anthem, familiar to every school child, as *Bande Mataram.*

All his philosophy inculcates the principle of development. The latent forces inherent in man must be brought out, so that

a radiant and commanding personality may find its manifestation. But for this, travail and suffering are necessary. As Iqbal says:

'Tis the fate of moths to consume in flame,
The suffering of moths is justified by the candle.
The pencil of the self limned a hundred todays
In order to achieve the dawn of a single tomorrow.
Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams,
That the lamp of one Muhammed might be lighted.

An advanced Sufi, Iqbal is really in the direct line of Indian thought and tradition as regards his attitude to life, modified only by the fact that all truths, to remain true, must be revisioned in terms of present and future existence. Re-presenting and re-stating what is profoundly instinct in the Indian spirit, Iqbal has thus become one of the most important personages of the renascence.

Actually, he is a very simple person, and a most brilliant conversationalist. One revisualises him always in his Punjabi dress, the wide trousers caught at the ankles, the long tight-waisted coat, and debonair *paggari,* curled up in a chair half veiled by clouds of smoke arising from his *hukah*—the long tube-stemmed Indian water pipe—discussing every phase of modern thought and ancient philosophy as eagerly as a boy and without the least pose or pretension, so that one remains for hours charmed and mentally excited.

It is a commentary on the Indian sense of values that Iqbal's poetry and philosophy caused the people to send him to the Punjab Legislature as one of their representatives. Subsequently, the British gave him a knighthood.

India's traditional method of, as it were, getting things over in song was amusingly utilized by Mr. Brayne for his fine uplift work in the Gurgaon District of Punjab. Bands of Boy Scouts and young students went around from village to village, singing songs about how to wash the baby, how to dispose of the village garbage, the advantages of thrift, and so forth, and the method proved most successful.

Kashmir is especially noted for the destinctive beauty of its songs, while in Kathiawar and Gujerat, the girls and women of the villages place themselves in a circle and move around with a peculiar step, clashing their anklets and singing while they turn, bend, sway, and clap their hands. At a moment's notice, too, they will invent a song dealing with the event at hand or lauding the visitor. Their perfect rhythm and coördination is one of the most astonishing things to watch.

This sort of group singing and dancing is very often connected with religious festivals. Up in the Himalayas, you may see the shepherds dancing at the spring festival, a strange and lovely sight. Clad in their tight trousers of grey, black or pink, with coats of natural wool tight to the waist and thence kilted to the knees, a dozen lengths of goat's hair rope round their waists, and often with flowers stuck into their rolled black caps, they stand in a row, each man with a drum. Contrary to the usual practice, they play these with sticks.

The drums are tuned to a deep note except one, somewhat longer than the others and tightened to a higher pitch, which forms the accompaniment. Slowly they begin, with one double beat, working up gradually to two double beats, with a pause, then three, with a pause and three again. Then the dancing begins, the men turning round in each pause, and then each dancing round his neighbour, beating alternate drums. Faster and faster they whirl, until the thing becomes a frenzy of whirling drum beats, and suddenly everything stops dead as the dancers fall exhausted.

Nowhere in the world is the use of drums understood as it is in India. They are not only, as in the West, an accompaniment, but an integral part of the music, and, with the exception of the full sized *vina* of which there are only fourteen good players in India, the most difficult of all instruments to play well. Usually you find three or four drums in an instrumental group—possibly one *dhol,* a long drum played at both ends, and two or more *tablas,* small upright drums differently pitched. All of these are played with the heel of the palm and the tips of the fingers, different notes being achieved according to the spot struck.

Among the jugglers and monkey trainers, a tiny hand drum is used. It is shaped rather like the reel in the old game of Diabolo, and to each end a string culminating in a small weight is attached. With amazing dexterity, the player rattles this in one hand, achieving exact time and different rhythms while he sings.

But there was a bright, sunlit morning when I stood on the roof of a palace and listened to the Rajput war drums played by the zenana guards in the courtyard below. All around me, women attendants, barefooted, wearing their best *saris,* came and went in swift silence. By my side stood one of the princesses, exquisite in delicate silks, heavily bordered with gold, immense diamonds and rubies around her neck, braceletting her wrists, and in her ears.

Peering over the top of the fretted, marble coping, we could just see, far below, the big drums standing on three legs, around which stood a group of Arabs. These men are not dressed like the movie sheikhs of the desert, but wear, instead, bright *paggaris,* trousers, and shirts, and, around their waists, a knee-length skirt of gaudily striped, heavy silk. Into their waistbands they stick their short daggers, three or four of them, curved and hilted in ivory and silver.

But those drums. . . . In their wild exultant thudding was all the glory and excitement of war, as it used to be in more civilized days. You could hear in it, the jingling of chain armour, the tramp of horses' feet. You could see the sun flashing from the tips of shaken lances, and the scarlet and yellow of their pennants. All of death and horror and fear the drums told you, but they also told you of the one splendid moment into which all life was crammed before the warrior stepped magnificently into darkness. It was the soul of war, when war had a soul made up of chivalry and heroism, when the victor was generous, and his enemy worthy, when cities were sacked, and looted and burned and prisoners carried off, but even such a man as Nadir Shah would stop the pillage for the sake of a noble word or a fine gesture on the part of a defeated enemy.

Gradually, as you stay in India, its music comes to express for you the quality of the country, its true rhythm. Like all funda-

mental, necessary things, it is never divorced from the people. Through it, you learn something, even, of other music which is real because it is popular—a rhythm which at once moves and represents a people. You understand how jazz, which is also a real music, absolutely belongs to New York—how its broken, syncopated beat and its harsh, tearing sounds are the beat and the sound which express New York.

And then you begin to understand how the subtle, pattern-weaving music of India conveys India; how the philosophic, imagist music of the *raga,* with its one theme varied in a thousand ways, never beginning, and never finishing, but just becoming audible and going again into inaudibility, is the real expression of India's sense of eternity—beginning in the unknown and going beyond our ken.

And how, too, the chanted poetry and the songs of India, with their multicoloured imagery and many hidden meanings are so vital in Indian life, contribute so much to the culture of India and to the thought and existence of the people. Thus, as the spirit of India flames again, it is natural that, as is happening, its music and poetry should also be revived.

For long, music has been in the hands of professionals only, no woman of family dreamt of learning to sing or play. Just as poetry was in danger of becoming over refined and overclassicized, so music was becoming stereotyped and somewhat in disrepute. Now, all that has changed. Poetry is a vital force, and in every family you will find someone who plays or sings, just as every school is teaching something of Indian music and something of the old and new songs of India.

In itself, this is a most significant indication of India's reawakening to its true self.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

GOLD, IVORY . . . . . .

THE women of India provided me with my greatest disillusionment. If the West had proved rather fatal as regards alcohol, disease, moral and physical ugliness, which seemed so much worse wherever Western influence was dominant in the East—surely there was one thing—the uplift of women.

For one is led, after all, to picture the women of the East as degraded, down-trodden, helpless victims of brutal lust, disregarded as soon as the male appetite is satisfied. One expected them to look like that—signs of tears, if not black eyes, scattered over their faces—bad-mannered, ignorant, hopeless, leaping for joy at the sight of the Western woman coming to liberate them at last from their shackles, what time they clutched numerous dying babies to their breasts and shielded their small daughters from attempted rape on the part of any passing male.

Wherefore my introduction to the Indian society of Delhi, at the pardah club, was something of a shock. Pardah clubs, which you find all over India, even in Indian States, are clubs for women only. No man, not even a male servant is admitted, because many of the members belong to families who keep the veil and do not appear before any man not of their immediate family. This club was, when I first went there, a charming enclosed garden, in the shelter of the Old Fort's walls, with seats, tennis and badminton courts, etc.

Delhi being the site of the old Moghal Court, its society is predominantly Muslim, and so most of the members of the club are Musalman ladies. I found myself, therefore, being welcomed with shy dignity by a group of perfectly charming

women of various ages. Two or three wore delicate *saris,* bordered in gold, others wore pyjamas, close fitting from knee to ankle, and *kurtas,* knee-length coats of vivid brocades and silks, with a transparent veil of georgette over their heads.

All of them had beautiful jewels in sets; that is, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and rings to match. Some had a small diamond in the left nostril, though this is more usual among Hindu women, and is becoming less fashionable. Their black hair, carefully oiled and perfumed, was parted in the centre and drawn simply back. Under their eyes, to be exact, in a line along the lower eyelid, they wore *surma* or *kajul,* the one, a preparation of antimony, the other, of a certain soot and some oily substance.

The fine texture of their skins, varying in color from ivory to a deep tan, the depth and beauty of their eyes, and the singular delicacy of feet and ankles, wrists, and hands were alike remarkable. Everything about them, their gentle, dignified manner, their looks, their conversation, bore witness to an exquisite breeding brought down from generations of exquisite ancestry.

Nor was there anything particularly crushed about them. On the contrary, especially in the fine faces of the more elderly women, one read the habit of command and a keen observation and intelligence. Young girls of fifteen or sixteen were playing tennis and badminton, and it was noteworthy that the younger generation as a rule spoke excellent English, and were called to interpret for their elders when language failed them.

In short, they were charming and interesting. Very quickly one found oneself at ease, much more so than in the average Western drawing-room among a group of complete strangers with linguistic gulfs between you and your companions. There was no necessity to make the slightest effort. With the simple directness of children, or very great aristocrats, if you had nothing special to say, you sat still. If you wanted to know something, you asked a question.

In India, one does not talk painfully about the weather. It is polite to ask whence you come, who you are, who your father is, if your parents are alive and well, if your husband is alive

"The Indian Bathes Constantly Wherever Water is Available."

and well, and your children, if any. Persia carries this a little further in enquiring about every limb and member of your body. You do this between formal pauses, during which is it excessively rude to stare at anyone. Then, as a rule, fruit or cool drinks are offered to you. If your call is purely formal, the signal for departure is given when your hostess offers you *pan supari.*

On no account may you refuse this, because it has a ceremonial significance; to refuse is to decline the friendship of the person who offers it to you. But if, for some reason, you don't wish to eat it, you take it and keep it until you are safely off the premises.

Formal or informal, no visitor dreams of omitting these preliminary enquiries, just as no hostess dreams of omitting return enquiries, *pan supari,* or formal thanks for the visitor's trouble in coming to see her.

I was fascinated and delighted. "My heart", as the Eastern saying goes, "became cool." Here was something to which one could not fail to respond; a sensitive beauty, a delicacy of feeling and perception, which made it possible to expand without —how shall I say—fear of psychological disaster. Such things are difficult to explain or to analyse; they are made up of intangibilities—warmth, friendliness, simplicity, naturalness and things that have no name.

The general impression I carried away was never to be altered, regardless of all the details to be filled in, from that day to this. Among Indian women I was to find my most intimate friends, from whom I would have no possible secret, and who had no secrets from me. As friends they are, once their affection is really yours, devoted and loyal to an amazing degree, lavishing upon you a wealth of tenderness and care, of delicate sympathy with your moods and wishes, of confidence and patience that I, for one, had never thought possible.

Naturally, women in India are human like anybody else. They are not all angels walking lightly upon the earth. Some are ignorant and stupid, some malicious, some bad housekeepers whose homes and persons are dirty, some spoil their children until you long to smack the brats, some gossip, some intrigue.

But, as I stayed, sometimes for long periods, with my Indian friends, accepted as one of the family, living the same life, knowing all that went on—because Indian houses are very open and free—I could not help realizing that they had something I had missed elsewhere.

And in the end I came to feel, profoundly, that India's women are one of the great centres of her spiritual strength, and her extraordinary stability. I felt ashamed of some of the lies and misunderstandings one hears in the West.

A woman's life is often hard in India. Life is hard anywhere, if you dare to face it honestly and try for the best there is in it. Hindu laws, unlike those of Islam, do not give her much in the way of legal rights, such as personal property and inheritance. Nevertheless, the Code of Manu, which is one of the most informative post-Vedic writings and upon which a great deal of Hindu law is based, though it expressly declares that women are at no time fit for independence, also states:

> Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law who desire their own welfare. Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased, but where they are not honoured no sacred rite yields rewards. Where the female relatives live in grief the family soon wholly perishes, but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. The houses on which female relatives not being duly honoured, pronounce a curse perish completely as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek their own welfare should always honour women, on holidays and festivals with gifts of ornaments, clothes and dainty food. (3.55.59)

A woman's curse is, to this day, considered one of the most potent and terrible of all in India.

On the question of the respect paid to women in India, it is also interesting to read the famous Abbe Dubois—from whom so much derogatory information is constantly quoted. In the first translation of his book, published by the East India Company in 1817, he says, speaking of Southern India or Bengal:

> But degraded as Hindu women are in private life it must be admitted that they receive the highest respect in public. They certainly do not pay them those flat and frivolous compliments which

> are used amongst us, and which are the disgrace of both sexes; but, on the other hand, they have no insults to dread. A woman may go wheresoever she pleases; she may walk in the most public places (must I except those where Europeans abound?) and have nothing to fear from libertines, numerous as they are in the country. A man who should stop to gaze on a woman in the street or elsewhere, would be universally hooted as an insolent and a low bred fellow. (p. 200. 1817 ed.)

As regards the private life of an Indian woman, it must be remembered that no foreign man would have much opportunity of judging this.

When it comes to Islamic law, women have very extensive legal rights. They possess their own person and their own property. That is they cannot be married without their formal consent, and their dowry and whatever they may inherit is their own. They also have specific inheritance rights, and may not be disinherited. Islam permits of divorce under very simple and easy circumstances, but prevents women from being lightly put away by insisting upon the return of whatever monies, etc. came with them on their marriage. It gives them definite rights with regard to their children, and in short, regards women as the weaker, but not the inferior, sex.

Perhaps one of the most beautiful phrases ever coined about women was that of the Prophet Muhammed, "Paradise is under the feet of the mothers."

In discussing the position of women one day with Mrs. Besant, who has been one of the great leaders in the cause of Indian women, she pointed out to me that, as regards civil rights—that is the right to vote, etc.—Indian women had one inestimable advantage over Englishwomen in their suffrage battle. No law debars women from such rights. Custom is the real enemy. Not having any definite disbarment to be repealed makes the whole question much easier to adjust.

So, today, without a ripple of opposition or excitement, you find women appointed as magistrates in various cities; women on municipal councils; women on local and District school boards; women running hospitals both as doctors in charge and as mem-

bers of the governing board; all Indians. And, curiously enough, the first woman to be admitted to the Bar in England was an Indian, Miss Cornelia Sorabji. You find, too, more than one Maharani appointed as Regent of an Indian State, while in Travancore, succession to the throne and inheritance is through women, not through men.

Over and over again in India, you find that custom and poverty are the two chief factors militating against women's happiness. A clever and energetic Muslim lady used to tell me, so often that it became a war cry, "What we Musalman women want is our rights—the rights we are entitled to by Islamic law. We don't need anything more than those." These two points were brought out most forcibly by the late Dowager Begam of Bhopal, one of the world's leading women who, for years ruled a large and important Indian State.

In her Presidential speech at the second annual session of the All India Women's Conference on Educational Reform, in 1928, addressed to a gathering of delegates from every part of India, of every creed and caste, she attacked the whole question with utter frankness. In the first place, she stated, the main cause of the unsatisfactory condition of female education was that so far it had been handled wholly by men.

She pointed out that even as regards men's education, the position was still one of great difficulty in India, and that the woman problem was even more complicated, its difficulties being two-fold: those besetting education itself, and those that are the result of outside conditions and influences.

Poverty is the first stumbling block. In a country where the monthly per capita income is as low as a dollar a head, money for education is not easily forthcoming. Early marriage is another factor, though here, Her Highness pointed out, India should not condemn wholly without careful examination of the needs and causes which led to early marriage in the first place. She felt that it was more a question of excess and of the excrescences such as time causes to appear in connection with all religions than of complete evil.

One of her most illuminating passages summed up the pardah

question—seclusion of women. It must be remembered that the Dowager Begam was a most ardent Musalman, like all her family and, incidentally, she had a word for word translation of the *Koran Sharif*—the revealed Book of Islam—into Urdu made for her benefit. She said, in part:

> "Another custom that needs re-adjustment is the pardah. There can be no denying of the fact that the present strictness of the pardah system among the Musalmans does not form part of their religious obligations. It is based upon purely local considerations and is not found in other Islamic countries.
>
> The motive underlying the system as it obtains in India was perhaps the prevention of an improper association of men and women. The idea was that women should not make a show of their charms, and it was with that idea in view that pardah was introduced in Islamic countries. In some of them it still exists, but nowhere is it so strict as in India. If the system were remodelled according to peculiarities of environments and placed on a reasonable footing most of the evil effects it has on female education would disappear, while, at the same time, *we should be spared from the situation that is causing anxiety in the West.*"

The last sentence is worth underlining, because it truly represents the vast mass of feminine opinion in India, which by no means admires the Western woman in all her manifestations.

Pardah, as it is observed in India today, is strictest among the Rajputs, who are Hindus. Arising from sheer necessity, which, as the Abbe Dubois' little aside regarding Europeans and women in public shows, was not entirely dispelled by the coming of Westerners, it has, to some extent, become a form of social snobbery. There exists a most fascinating diary written by an Englishwoman of the Georgian period, who married a Musalman gentleman and came to live in Lucknow when the Kings of Oudh still reigned, which gives some light on the question.

She lived happily in pardah for twelve years, incidentally remaining a Christian and freely discussing religious questions with her husband and his family. Her diary, which is the only really intimate and genuine record of Indian family life ever written by a European, as far as I know, shows an immense house, con-

taining in reality several families, all mixing on friendly terms, with plenty of air and exercise. Under such conditions, pardah, which was strictly maintained only among the better classes, was no great hardship.

Today such classes are much poorer. Their houses are smaller, without all that light and air, and under such conditions, very strict pardah is bad for the health.

On the other hand, the strictest pardah is rapidly going. Women go about in closed cars or carriages to visit each other and to go to their clubs. More and more, the idea is spreading that women should go about, and even appear, to a limited extent, in public, where it is absolutely necessary for welfare work, such as schools, baby centres, hospital committees, etc.

Younger men are insisting upon their wives coming out of pardah to that extent. Even among some of the Rajput princes, the complete strictness is being very slowly but surely relaxed. In any case, pardah has not necessarily kept women from all knowledge of the world, because, while it is impossible for strangers to see into the zenana or women's apartments, it is usually possible for women to see something of the mardana or men's apartments.

At a State banquet, for instance, or an entertainment in an Indian State, if you look around carefully, you will nearly always see that arrangements have been made for the ladies to see everything, though they are themselves hidden behind latticework screens. In movie theatres there are pardah arrangements made, and if a woman of position wants to hear a lecture or something like that, it is usually possible to have a screened gallery or similar arrangements.

One of the most amusing amateur theatrical shows I went to in India, was a version of Othello given by the boys of Jagirdar College, for the sons of nobles, in Hyderabad State. With other Indian ladies, I saw it perfectly from the pardah gallery in the college hall.

It may be a question of temperament, but one can grow to like the idea pardah represents. There is much more sympathy and "freemasonry" among women in the East than in the West.

Western men have their clubs and circles where women don't go, and one felt a distinct lift in one's status in the East, finding places where women could be at ease among themselves, and men were not allowed. It seemed to me that both sexes deserved that freedom from each other. Again, to dress quietly and modestly for public occasions, reserving gorgeous clothes and jewels for the interior and for meeting other women, really has a certain *chic*, an undeniable good taste.

The most up-to-date motors in India, such as those belonging to Indian princesses, are usually fitted with a special kind of blue glass which, besides cutting out the glare of the sun, not only allows the person in the motor to see out very clearly, but absolutely prevents the outsider from seeing in.

Millions of Indian women have never kept pardah in all history, though a certain reserve is customary everywhere. One noticed, however, that these Indian ladies who made a point of breaking every restriction, going to dances and so forth, seemed to lose something of their distinctive charm and attraction. They hardened, so that one liked them much less, and found them less wise, less tender, less graceful. Hurriedly, one remembers that in all India, one came across less than a score, omitting the "smart" Parsis of Bombay, etc.

In another part of her speech, the late Dowager Begam also pointed out, as one of the inherent difficulties attending women's education, the scarcity of teachers. The teaching profession ought to provide a career for widows, but not only is it shamefully underpaid, but there are difficulties regarding the provision of teachers for rural areas. No one can reasonably ask a woman, not used to living alone, to go out entirely alone into remote villages and run a school all by herself.

Many noble women do it, but it should not be. The situation is not at all like that formerly obtaining in the West, when the lone schoolmarm could board with a family. Differences of caste, let alone the impossibility of actually finding such accommodation, wash this idea out. You need two or three women; quarters for them; possibly, in the beginning, some sort of watchman for their quarters; and above all,—enough women

supervisors, and a complete separation of control from men principals or masters.

You couldn't have a school in every village, so again you need some form of transportation for the children. It is not impossible, even on the score of expense, but at present little or nothing is being done even to provide Normal schools for women teachers. And having got all this, then there must be a curriculum fitting the daily needs of women.

When one reviews the actual situation, and observes how very little is done by the Government of India for women's education, it is no longer surprising that so few are literate in English—many more of course are literate in Oriental languages—on the contrary it is surprising that women should be as educated as they are. The problem of education for the princesses and women of the upper classes is, to all intents and purposes, untouched in British India. You have Queen Mary College in Lahore, which is an excellent institution, and another fine school in Poona run by one of the Sorabji sisters. Roman Catholic convent schools fill the gap.

Indian States are ahead in this respect. Porbandar, for instance, besides quite an extensive system of primary education for girls and boys, has a Musalman madrassa, (secondary and higher education), with three hundred boys and four hundred girls. Bikaner has a school for daughters of the nobility. Hyderabad State not only provides, in the Zenana College, higher education, and has facilities for women in one of its universities, as well as sending three or four women each year on special scholarships to English universities and training centres, but also has, in Mahboobia Girls' School, the finest institution for girls of the upper classes in the whole of India.

One of the most interesting phenomenon, where the relations of different races are concerned, is the facility with which they accuse each other of being over-sexed, or sexually self-indulgent. This is particularly true as regards Anglo-Saxon races in their attitude towards others, possibly because, while strongly sexed themselves, they have until recently been more unnatural in their social views of sex than almost any other country.

Knowing absolutely nothing of the intimacies of Indian homes, and, as often as not, very little of the subjects they discuss the Europeans in India have a tendency to insist so much upon the predominance of sex in Indian life that one becomes nauseated—not with the Indian, but with the European mind which appears actually to gloat upon such things.

As a matter of fact, going about in India, one preferred Indian society not only because one found there a wider range of interests, but because there was not, in the relations of men and women, that almost constant veering towards some emphasis on sex that is so prevalent in the West nowadays. Sex is far more normally treated in India, because not only do all marry as a matter of course, but they marry comparatively early, and not upon a purely sexual basis, however romantically disguised. The Indian never for a moment dreams that the summit of happiness is in the sexual relationship or act, as such.

Indians marry, if they are Musalmans, as a social duty; if they are Hindus, as a socio-religious duty, because in the latter case it is impossible to disentangle the two. When they don't marry, or rather, when they cease the physical life of marriage deliberately on a religious pretext, it is as a means of preserving certain physical energies for other purposes after their social duty has been accomplished.

Child-marriage is definitely an evil in certain parts of India, among certain lower and Brahmin castes especially. Its worst aspect is when there is great disparity in age, and this is now considered so revolting by the Indians that when, in 1929, such a marriage took place in Benares, the vernacular papers all over the country published the most indignant accounts, while meetings of protest, etc., were held in Benares itself.

One of the things that has never been made properly clear is that the initiative in fighting child-marriage was taken by Indians. Malabira about 1889 raised such a disturbance, that the Government was forced to take notice, and did in fact take action to the extent of sending around a questionnaire to various orthodox Brahmins, where the idea of legal measures met with opposition on the ground of interference with religious customs.

The fight was continued by such men as Bhandarkar, Ranade, Telang, and Chandevarkar, all eminent Sanskritists and exponents of Hindu law, who did this on the express ground that prepuberty consummation was against the letter and the spirit of the Hindu code and authorities. With their help, acknowledged by the then Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, and as a result of their pressure, the age of consent was raised in 1890 from ten to twelve years. It is amusing to remember that as late as 1924 at the least, more than one American State still retained ten years as the age of consent.

India thought this not enough, and as soon as the Legislative Assembly came into being, Sir Hari Singh Gour began his campaign, introducing bill after bill, so that by 1925 the age of consent within marriage, was raised to thirteen. Meanwhile Rai Sahib Har Bilas Sarda, backed by the women of the country, brought in his bill to abolish marriage under fourteen. Such powerful bodies as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, etc., had been steadily fighting child-marriage from as far back as 1901, and, according to the Census Report of that year, the Social Congress which meets in connection with the National Congress had made the abolition of child-marriage a leading plank in its platform.

The Census Report for 1911 remarks especially on the feeling against child-marriage in the higher castes of Hinduism. The Census Report of 1921 again confirms this, and adds:

> The change is most marked in the Hindu community. . . . It (sic) is most conspicuous in the age categories, 10 to 15 for women and 10 to 20 for men. In Bengal, Bihar and Orissa the rise in the age of marriage is marked. The number of males left unmarried between the ages of 10 and 15 has risen from 826 in 1891 to 868 in 1921, the increase in the age period 15 to 20 being from 594 to 665. The case of girls is still more striking and for both males and females the rise during the last decade has been exceptionally high.

Nevertheless, the Government of India felt itself unable to back Har Bilas Sarda's bill. Actually, at one moment, having given its promise of neutrality and finding that the Bill was about to

pass, Whips were called in and the Bill defeated by Government votes.

This incident aroused the most bitter feeling, among the women of India especially, who then organized a tremendous, active campaign designed to force the passage of this Bill. Meetings of women were held all over India, culminating in passionate scenes at the Educational Conference of 1928, when a deputation of women went to the Viceroy in person as well as to all the members of the Legislative Assembly.

The petition to the Viceroy included a prayer to His Excellency to the effect that if the Government could not back the bill, it would at least, *this time,* remain neutral. But in spite of encouraging words, the Government again decided to postpone the Bill, amid groans from the women's committee present in the visitor's gallery, for one year "in order to ascertain the opinion of the country."

Two committees were formed; one to deal with the age of consent, the other, with child marriage, both of which toured the country. Their report was overwhelmingly in favour of legal abolition of early marriage, and stated in the strongest terms that further age of consent raising was useless without legal measures against child-marriage. Women picketed the Assembly during its sessions on the Bill. Meanwhile, an extraordinary bit of manœuvring took place.

The Muslim independents in the Assembly number about fifteen or so. They generally support Government measures in return for similar favours. Until this time, Muslims had steadily averred that the Bill did not concern them, which was actually true, as child-marriage is not an Islamic institution, though at times it may occur among Muslims. At one moment, Muslims had actually demurred at being left out of the Bill, upon which they were included.

Suddenly, the Muslims in the Assembly, with a few honourable exceptions, opposed the Bill on the grounds of interference with their religion! Naturally, the rest of India including the vast majority of Musalman opinion, promptly drew conclusions as unflattering to these opponents as they were to the Govern-

ment. Certainly, the opposition did not coincide with the expressed convictions of such noteworthy men as Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan whose name was, rightly or wrongly, published as among those against the Bill.

Nevertheless, it passed, and the legal age of marriage in India is now fourteen. Meanwhile, long before the Government of India dared to pass anything like this, Indian State after Indian State, Baroda, Limbdi, Mandi, Kashmir, Porbandar, etc., was passing laws against child-marriage and rigidly enforcing them.

That is the true story of the child-marriage campaign, the latter stages of which I, myself, witnessed in India, being personally acquainted with all the leading actors.

Nothing is more instructive than a study of the actual figures of child-marriage, as given by the Government's Census Report of 1921. Admittedly I have but little faith in any statistics about India, but still, what there is may serve as an indication.

You find this Report stating that of one hundred thousand persons of the female sex in India, of all ages and conditions, 2,575, or about twenty-five per cent are between the ages of five and fifteen. Of infants less than five, about fifteen in a thousand are returned as married or widowed. Among Hindus, 2534 of ten thousand of all ages are between five and fifteen. Between these ages, the proportion of girls married is two hundred and forty-six per thousand of all religions; two hundred and eighty-seven per thousand of the Hindu religion, less than thirty per cent. But the great proportion of marriages take place when the girl is fifteen or over.

What was to me a most unexpected bit of evidence came out in the course of the thousands of reports collected from women witnesses, doctors, etc., all over India regarding the average age of puberty in the country. It is not, as a matter of fact, much below that of the West, especially America. As in the West, you find a minority maturing between ten and twelve, the majority maturing between twelve and fourteen, and a negligible few, later. Personal enquiries convinced me that this was so, and,

further, that girls of the upper classes tended to mature, if anything, a little later than those of the lower.

Of course, the rapidity with which women age depends really upon their mode of life. Peasant women, working too hard in Europe for instance, bloom and age quite as rapidly as a similar class in India. The great modern difference is that Indian women, of all classes, prefer to grow old gracefully rather than attempt to appear as young as their granddaughters, but they retain vigour and intelligence quite as long as the Western woman does.

Of the thirty per cent of Hindu girls who are married before fifteen, it would be absurd to state that all, or even half of that number cohabit with their husband before that age. In connection with this part of the question, I came across three utterly different sources of information, besides extensive, personal observation, which, though touching different aspects of the same question, each afforded a confirmatory light.

Dr. Margaret Balfour of Bombay stated in a letter to the *Times* of London:

> I have notes of 304 Hindu mothers delivered of their first babies in Bombay Hospitals. The average age was 18.7 years. 85.6 per cent were 17 years or over; 14.4 per cent were below 17; 14 was the youngest age and there were three of that age. I have compared these figures with the reports of the Madras Maternity Hospital for the years 1922–24. 2312 mothers were delivered of their first babies. The average age was 19.4 years, 86.2 were 17 years or over; 13.8 were below 17, thirteen was the youngest age. There were 7 mothers aged thirteen, and 22 aged 14. The Madras figures included not only Hindus but women of other communities as well. I have reports of 3,964 cases of childbirth from other parts of India including the North. Of these only 10 were below fifteen years of age, thirteen was the youngest age. . . .

Again one has to be very careful of statistics in India. Indian women are not in the habit of going to hospitals to have their babies unless they fear some sort of complication, so that it is likely that an unnatural proportion of childbirths in hospitals would be difficult or bad cases. Madras and Bombay tap two of the regions where there is a larger proportion of child-marriages than elsewhere, except in Calcutta.

The next point that struck my attention came out in the numbers of meetings in various parts of the country held by women discussing child-marriage. Cohabitation was never one of the leading points discussed; often this was not mentioned. The chief reason why Indian women protested was because, there being neither divorce nor remarriage under Hindu law, such early marriages made for an undue proportion of youthful widows. Their next reason was that, especially among the lower classes where children are an economic asset to some extent, the young wife's education was interfered with because the husband's family needed her help in the house.

On the other hand, among the upper classes, it was my personal experience that very often the young man about to go to England was married to prevent his being "trapped by those dreadful Englishwomen," as the Indian mothers said. He did not, of course, live with his wife, but very often he and his family insisted upon having her educated if she were not already studying in order to be something of a companion to him when he returned.

Among the women of my own generation, Hindus of high caste who were personal friends or acquaintances, two were child-brides. One, who is now a famous woman leader, was exceedingly unhappy, and, left a widow very young, eventually broke all laws, fell in love, and remarried. Another, who is the charming wife of a rapidly rising Government official, was married at nine, but practically never saw her husband until he returned from his studies at an English university. She is now the devoted mother of four or five delightful and healthy children and a happy woman.

Yet a third manner of viewing child-marriage, as regards its worst aspect, was afforded me in the form of a question on the part of an highly cultured Brahmin, who said, "Yes, that it should be permitted at all is dreadful. But taking the most criminal phase—have you compared the statistics of rape on children in the West with those of cohabitation with child-wives in India? You will find that India still wins, from the point of view of sexual morality."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

. . . AND MUSK

PERHAPS a comparatively early marriage has this in its favour; it seems to lessen prostitution. The prostitute, professional or amateur, is not such a feature of Indian life as she is of European. She is there, but quite apart, decent in her dress, and as a rule not circulating very much beyond her own quarter of the city.

Roughly you may divide the prostitutes of India into three classes: the so-called *devadassis,* or temple dancers, who exist, I believe, in the South, but who are not as numerous as Europeans believe, and whom I never even saw; the dancing girl whose profession is hereditary, and who may or may not be a prostitute; and the scum of the ports, European or Indian, who exist for the sailors etc., and who are wholly dreadful. One might add the bazaar women who also exist wherever there is a military garrison, for the garrison, officially or unofficially inspected.

Peshawar, that northern city which stands at the outer gate of India, is famous for its courtesans and its dancing boys. The latter, in dress and talent, resemble those of Morocco. Just where and how the dancing boy originated is a little difficult to say. He is not to be found among the Hindus, to whom, as both Burton and Westermarck have pointed out, homosexuality and lesbianism are practically unknown. The cut of his hair, bound with a fillet, and something about his dress which is not in the least like that of the women of the East, suggests classical periods of Mediterranean civilization. One wonders if he, perhaps, came to the East by way of Greece or Rome and Persia, for he reminds one of the boys of whom Martial speaks in his epigrams.

It was in Peshawar that I met Prem un Nissa, in her day one of the most renowned courtesans in India.

To arrange an introduction required a certain amount of skill and insistence. My British friends, who could not possibly afford to be seen walking through the courtesans' bazaar, were rather horrified. In the end, however, I got my way with the help of a kindly Persian gentleman whose only stipulation was that I should come and explain to his wife in person just what it was all about. Otherwise his domestic life might be seriously disturbed.

Prem un Nissa, a still attractive woman of about forty, lives almost in the heart of the courtesans' bazaar though she has retired from active professional life. But her friends live there, and she has a delightful house whose courtyard, shaded by cool palms and set about with shrubs, suggested to me those you see in the old provincial hotels of France. Our hostess, herself—"A very rich woman," my Persian friend murmured—was dressed with the simplicity affected by women of a certain age, and received us charmingly.

One gathered, sitting there, drinking soft drinks and eating a little fruit, that she was witty and intelligent. Courtesans are trained, among other things, in the art of conversation, because their first duty is to entertain. India has its classical manual for courtesans, as for everything else, written in Sanscrit. It is a curious mixture of cynicism and art.

The courtesan's first motive, you find, is to obtain money. To this end she should avoid young men. They lack delicacy, and are not as well off as their elders. She must infatuate her lovers, mentally and physically, by her accomplishments, taking care to make each one feel that he is the only man in her life, and so on and so on.

It would seem that, even in his lapses, the Indian demands a semblance of the finer emotions though he may, at bottom, know perfectly well that it is but a semblance. The courtesan, on the other hand, has a definite pride of tradition and standing. She is what she is by long descent, and actual prostitution is not the chief nor the only function society allots to her. At weddings,

"Peshawar, a Romantic City."

darbars, and princely functions, she provides the entertainment, and though some of her songs may be rather frank, she must also know something of classical music and poetry. For years, the art of music was kept alive in India only by the courtesans.

With Prem un Nissa as our guide, philosopher, and friend—highly amused, I admit, by the whole episode—we visited other ladies of the profession. There were, I discovered, not more than one hundred and fifty to two hundred in the entire city. It seemed an astonishingly small number, considering the size and importance of Peshawar, and the fact that it is, above all, a city of transients coming from all parts of Asia to trade there. Moreover, it has a reputation second only to Delhi as regards the number and beauty of its courtesans.

One noticed, going through the quarter, a dingy and unpleasant side street where women sat at half doors, over which low class men—wild camel drivers from the North—leaned talking. These girls, Prem un Nissa explained with a mixture of contempt and pity, did not belong to the hereditary class. They were mostly Kashmiris, or other hill girls, kidnapped or, more often, sold into slavery for economic reasons. A steady campaign goes on, in Kashmir, to abolish this illegal practice, but it is difficult to stop such things until the standard of living makes them unnecessary.

Fortunately, one observed, these were very much in the minority. Most of the courtesans lived in their own houses with other members of their family, or at least seemed to have their own apartments upstairs on the second floor.

My Persian friend insisted that we must call upon a well-known singer and dancing girl, who had just come up from Delhi in order to attend a big wedding somewhere outside Peshawar. He also felt obliged to tell me repeatedly, lest I become too fascinated, perhaps, that these were, "Very bad womens. Take all a man's money and send him to hell in after life. Sometimes they see handsome man walking about; send him letter telling him they love him. He so charmed, he loses all his senses. Bad women."

She, it appeared, by no means depended upon prostitution

for her livelihood. With her she had brought her own musicians, excellent performers on the *tabla* and *sitar,* who accompanied her while she sang to us. During the interludes we smoked cigarettes—I noticed that contrary to the practice of most respectable Indian women, smoking was prevalent in this society—laughed and talked, my Persian friend enjoying himself immensely between the moral asides which he felt bound to address to me.

But the rising beauty of the quarter who, Prem un Nissa thought, would eventually take her place in the annals of the profession, lived at the other end of the bazaar. In a cool, roomy house, clean and well furnished, we found her with her sisters, mother, and grandmother—all of the same profession. And she was a beauty.

She might have been a European, ivory skinned, with large well-set eyes, and beautiful reddish hair which she wore loose, waving naturally to below her shoulders. The family it seemed, was Kashmiri, and they were full of curiosity as to the status of their profession in the West.

About here I began to feel thankful for a little Morals Court experience which enabled me to answer with a certain modicum of sense. But the details I afforded apparently shocked my hearers deeply. Brazen solicitation in the streets, for instance, was an entirely new thought to them. So was the idea of being obliged to cater to a number of men in the course of one day. "We," said the grandmother, while the rest nodded approval, "do not dream of such a thing. We choose whom we like, and not even every night. One would wear out and die."

I explained that to the best of my knowledge it was rather a wearing profession in the West, and talked hastily about reformatories and rescue homes. This also seemed to meet with no approbation. "You avail yourself of their services and then you try to put them in prison," stated the beauty of the family sternly. "That is bad work."

Did they, I asked, ever marry? And what happened then?

Yes, sometimes they married. But very often marriage

bored them and they returned. Once married, however, they became what the West would call respectable; that is, their former status was, for public purposes, forgotten. "It would never be so in the West." I remarked, "Ah," said the grandmother, "but then all you have told me convinces me that your people behave like barbarians to women!"

One hadn't realized it, but on the face of it, there was no answer. I rather wished some of the many people who criticize Eastern morality had spent a similar afternoon.

Outside of those whose profession makes other demands, Indian women are singularly chaste, and pure of soul as well as body. The emphasis, however, is not upon virginity, which as a permanent state is definitely discouraged in Islam and to a very great extent in Hinduism, but upon fidelity and personal modesty.

Domestic life among Indians is simple and sweet. The lower castes, of course, go out and work. You have castes of women gardeners, women coolies who are very sturdy indeed; women sweepers, etc. Sometimes, as in Europe, you may see women working in the fields. In any case, the household tasks are fairly heavy; there is corn to be ground, fuel cakes (of dung) to be made, children to be cared for, cooking to be done.

Cooking, in such classes, is necessarily very limited, because the food supply is not great. Among the higher classes, it becomes much more elaborate, and most Indian ladies are excellent cooks. I know more than one Rajput princess who daily prepares with her own hands the principal meal for her father or her husband, thus keeping up an old tradition.

Another charming custom, which reminded one of earlier days in certain parts of America, is that of sending to your friends special dishes cooked by yourself. How often, in various parts of India, from North to South, a manservant and perhaps an *ayah* also, would arrive at my door bearing a covered tray. Opening it, I would find an entire meal, perhaps a delicious, dry, vegetarian curry, other vegetables cooked in *ghi, puris* (a form of bread), and sweetmeats, from a Brahmin lady. Or a chicken *pillau* with almonds and raisins in the rice, and various *halwas*

(sweetmeats of almond paste, milk, etc.), from a Muslim friend, with a note explaining that the friends in question had cooked this for me themselves.

Indian ladies, unless they are bad housekeepers, take a fastidious pride in their kitchens which are usually outside the main house connected, as they are in our Southern States, by a passageway. They may have one or two cooks, but for parties and similar occasions they will often turn to and prepare the special sweetmeats and perhaps some other dish themselves.

Among orthodox Brahmins, or any Brahmins, in fact, the cook must be of the same caste, as no lesser caste may even set foot in the kitchen. By a great stretching of privilege, I used to hang about the kitchen door to watch the proceedings, carefully avoiding even the tip of my foot across the threshold. First, the cook had to bathe, and then, clad only in his loin cloth, if he were a man, or in a clean *sari,* if a woman, proceed to business.

On occasion, one was invited to dine in a very orthodox Brahmin house—and the first experience of this kind was a little alarming. Neither one's host nor one's hostess could dine with one. The meal therefore had to be eaten in solitary state, while host and hostess sat with one, and thus eliminated all hope of not overeating. Nevertheless, one was touched by the kindness which found some way of giving hospitality even to another caste.

Indians, especially Hindus and Shi'a Muslims, make a fetish of personal cleanliness. Nothing amused me more than to see one or the other of my friends, having shaken hands with a European, rush off and wash at the earliest opportunity, because, for very concrete reasons, Europeans are considered to be rather dirty in their personal habits. "But they are dirty," Indian ladies would insist, wrinkling up their noses in disgust. "They smell. *You* don't smell! But then, we have never met anyone who had our habits, like you. Americans are evidently very clean people."

Besides bathing constantly it is also customary among certain castes of Hindus to oil the body daily. Eating with the

fingers, also, demands careful washing before and after each meal, so that in the end one came to feel that this was really far more sanitary than possibly half-washed knives and forks.

Indians always bathe and wash in running water. So in houses where the dining room was not provided with a basin and taps behind a screen, servants bring round a basin and ewer and pour the water over your hands while you soap and rinse, handing you a clean towel at the end. For bathing, if there is no shower, you stand or sit on a wooden stool and pour water over yourself, soaping yourself with your hands in between.

In the villages, you usually find the peasants' mud huts extraordinarily neat and tidy. The floors and often the walls, are beaten hard and polished with cow dung, which has the merit of keeping off insects. All over the country it is customary, every day, to put cots and bedding out in the sun, whose fierce rays act as a powerful disinfectant. There may be no sanitary arrangements, but no one is allowed to commit a nuisance within the confines of the village.

Industrial cities, however, do not provide a pleasant picture where living conditions and women are concerned, and a good deal of India's industrial trouble may quite rightly be put down to the shortsighted selfishness of mill owners, whether European or Indian. In Madras for instance, you find the women workers of the textile mills rising at three A.M. to get their morning and midday meal ready before five-thirty.

Before reaching the mills, at six-thirty they must see to the needs of their husbands and children. After a ten-hour day of hard work, they return about six in the evening. Drinking is fairly prevalent among the men, which adds to the excitement of daily life. On an average, these wretched women get about ten rupees a month—that is about three dollars and a half, on which they support themselves and their families. Naturally, they are often in debt and the standard of morality is low, especially as most of the women workers are under men supervisors. The kind of treatment they get is best illustrated by a story from the Labour Union records, where you read that a woman, having

dared to suckle her baby for a few minutes during working hours, is fined ten annas—that is one-sixteenth of her month's pay.

Living conditions in industrial cities are nearly always terrible. The primitive, but fairly effective rules of sanitation obtaining in the villages are obviously impossible. But nothing is substituted. You find the people living as best they may in filthy huts and *chawls,* the latter being dog-kennel erections of brick or stone, absolutely unfitted for any sort of habitation, but apparently "good enough for coolies" since they are built under municipal supervision.

In a great and wealthy city such as Ahmedabad, you find absolutely nothing efficient done in the way of drainage, clean water supply, garbage removal, malaria campaign, or even to abate such nuisances as dust, smoke, and the disposal of water used for bleaching and colouring purposes in the mills—which is let out in the neighbourhood by way of adding to subsoil moisture and the high death rate.

Under such conditions of work and living, it is not surprising to find mothers using opium to quiet their miserable babies, and disease rampant among the labouring classes. The statistics of venereal diseases, such as syphilis, which is known in India as the "Feringhi illness" because it was brought by Europeans, rise automatically and startlingly in ports, industrial cities, and garrison towns of British India.

While it is exceedingly difficult to obtain really accurate figures from hospitals in British India, where one cannot see the case records without special permission from the Government, one may consider the estimates given by various doctors in conversation as approximate, and these amount to an average of at least twenty-three per cent, including Europeans. One finds about the same figures applying to European cities.

In other parts of India, especially in Indian States where one could gain access to hospital records, with the ruler's permission, and also talk to the doctors in charge you find an average of not over six per cent, which is by no means a conservative estimate, and includes all venereal disease. On the whole, doctors who had had long experience, anything up to ten years in Lon-

don, and a fair experience of some years in parts of India away from European stations or ports, felt that the incidence of venereal disease was far less among Indians than among Westerners.

To this, one's observation added the qualification that in certain parts of India, among certain defined groups, one found that an original infection had spread, either owing to group intermarriage or, as in the case of the Todas and the Kulu hill people, whose women are very goodlooking and very promiscuous equally with Europeans and their own folk, owing to such polyandrous habits. In such groups, one noticed also that the birth rate was very much lower, so that their numbers steadily decrease.

Besides a great deal that is environmental, and for which she, justly, cannot be held to account, the Indian woman of the lower classes is usually somewhat ignorant as to the latest methods of child rearing, etc. Hence one could not praise too highly the work of the baby welfare clinics throughout India where Indians and Europeans of both sexes and all classes join together, working actively to provide milk, clothing, day creches, and other expert assistance for the poorer class mother.

But these do not reach the villages very much. A most thoughtful innovation in Indian life, along these lines, has been that of the Maharaja of Porbandar who, by way of a birthday gift to his people, presented the state with a number of ambulatory clinics in 1929. In many Indian States also, as well as by various associations in British India, the question of training proper *dais,* or midwives, has been actively taken up, with excellent results.

Looking over the needs of women in India, two things immediately spring to one's attention. First, the crying necessity for some widespread scheme to provide training for women teachers, in which the Government ought to interest itself very much more than it does officially. Lady Irwin realized this need when she took the presidency of the National Educational Fund started by Indian women at the Conference of 1928.

Secondly, the need for more, and much better-paid women

doctors, and hospitals for women staffed by women only. In this connection an analysis of the hospitals of this type now existing in the Punjab is interesting.

There are, in that large and rich province, fifty-seven hospitals for women staffed wholly by women. Of these, seven, with a total of two hundred and ninety-five beds are wholly supported by American money and staffed by American missions—mostly Presbyterian. Seven more with a total of two hundred and eighty beds are supported by various Church of England missions and English money. One, with twelve beds, is supported by British Presbyterians; two, with ninety beds, by English Baptists; two, with sixty beds, by Canada; one with twenty-five beds, by Scotland. Ten, with two hundred and eighty three beds, are supported by district Municipal boards which means Indian taxes; two with fifty-six beds are founded and supported wholly by Indians; one, founded by an Englishwoman, Miss Brown, is supported by contributions from India, England, and America. To some of these hospitals, the government gives small grants in aid.

What is known as the National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women in India—or, for short, the Dufferin Fund, was founded in 1880 as a result of an interview with Queen Victoria by a very noble Englishwoman, Dr. Bielby, who has given her whole life to the women of India. The Dufferin Fund supplies grants in aid to women's hospitals, Indian women medical and nursing students, etc., its main object being to provide women doctors and assistants.

Again one notes with interest that, of the subscriptions to the Punjab Branch in 1927, for instance, seventy-one out of one hundred and eighteen are Indians, who gave much the larger amounts.

Lady Hardinge Hospital and Medical College in Delhi is perhaps the finest thing of its kind in India. Founded by Lady Hardinge during her husband's viceroyalty, with very generous donations from Indian princes, nobles, etc., it also receives a Government grant of about a hundred thousand dollars a year.

Other interesting institutions founded by Vice-reines are

the Lady Chelmsford All India League for Maternity and Child Welfare, with an annual income of about fifty thousand rupees, which provides grants in aid to training schools for Health Visitors, especially in Lahore, Delhi, Madras, and Calcutta, and to child welfare centres, as well as undertaking a good deal of propaganda work. Its executive committee is mainly composed of British officials. All in all, there are about two hundred and fifty centres in India, including thirty-six organized by the British army for British children and eight by the Indian army for Indian children, where work connected with child welfare and maternity, including the training of midwives, is being carried on. The District Boards of Bengal alone have organized and run nearly forty midwives' training centres. Madras province Maternity and Child Welfare Association runs over fifty centres. Nearly all the money for these is Indian.

The Lady Minto Association provides trained nurses, of which there is a very great shortage in India.

For the women doctors and nurses, both Indian and European, in India one felt unqualified admiration. One also longed for quantities of money with which to increase their pitiful salaries. One of the most shameful statements I heard in India was made by an English male doctor at a meeting of the governing board of the Duffierin Hospital in Karachi, who said that four hundred rupees a month (about one hundred and fifty dollars) was not only ample salary for the principal woman doctor of this large woman's hospital, but that there were plenty of other women doctors to be had for less!

Superficially, the women of India may appear static. Certainly they are conservative until they decide among themselves upon this or that need, when nothing stops them. They have their own great leaders, women like Lady Hydari, Mrs. Brij Lal Nehru, Miss Cornelia Sorabji, the Maharani of Baroda, and scores of others who deserve lasting mention. And as you know Indian women more and more intimately, you feel and see a definite movement going on among them to which, as a whole, the men are sympathetic and encouraging.

As you know them more intimately, too, you are more and

more taken by their spiritual beauty, their generous sympathy and kindness, their gentleness and charm. What one might express, perhaps, in Oriental metaphor as the gold of their hearts, the ivory-like purity of their natures, and that musk of the soul which typifies, in the East, the irresistibly attractive fragrance of a spiritual being.

PART THREE

INTRODUCTION

"INDIA," it is customary to observe solemnly, "is a problem of world magnitude." Having said this, one dismisses this subject happily.

But why is it a problem? What are the factors of that problem? Somebody answers with a question, "Should India be given self-government?"

That question, it so happens, was answered ten years ago, in the preamble to the Government of India Act which stated that the purpose of the reforms it enacted was "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India."

It seems perfectly clear, but for many years since, India has argued and debated over the meaning of "responsible government." Sir Malcolm Hailey, while Home Member, gave the Die Hard British interpretation to the Legislative Assembly in February, 1924, as follows:

> If you analyse the term "full dominion self government" you will see that it is of somewhat wider extent conveying that not only will the executive be responsible to the Legislature, but that the legislature will in itself have the full powers which are typical of the modern dominion. I say there is some difference of substance because responsible government is not incompatible with a legislature with limited or restricted powers. It may be that full dominion self government is the logical outcome of responsible government; nay it may be the inevitable and historical development of responsible government, but it is a further and final step.

The Indian members of the Assembly, and Indian public opinion generally, repudiated this conception. A howl of rage

went up. But the position was maintained thereafter by a distinct section of British opinion. Not until the beginning of 1930 did Lord Irwin, with masterly statesmanship, settle it by announcing that India's goal was Dominion Status.

That point then is settled. Remains the dual question: When, and how? Before it can even be discussed, a number of situations and factors have to be taken into consideration—the question of national unity, is it possible? The British in India—how did they get that way? Where do the Indian States come in? Even, perhaps, something of the history of the lesser known but vitally important influences in the nationalist movement, which have made the Congress Party an extremist body.

Some of these things I have briefly described or analysed. They are not an answer to the outstanding question, but they are vital considerations affecting any answer.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DIVERSITY IN UNITY

"INDIA," I was always being solemnly assured by British officials who had spent all their lives in the country, "has never been a nation, and never will be a nation."

"Why?" I asked, wide eyed.

"Because it is made up of a bewildering and complex mass of different races, different creeds, different castes. There are . . ." here the kind official broke into a spate of figures to which I paid no attention, because they are all in the Encyclopædia Britannica anyway. "And," he concluded, "India has always been a conquered country, overwhelmed by invasion after invasion which it was unable to resist, weakened by internal disorders; therefore the people of India are grateful to the British Raj at least for one hundred and fifty years internal peace."

It all seemed vaguely familiar, and on a hot day one isn't inclined to argue anything. So I let the piece about the one hundred and fifty years pass, without even pointing out that the British have not held all India even for a hundred years, and that, except for a brief period after the Mutiny, not only have external wars been waged (a couple of Afghan affairs, and a Burmese war or so—to say nothing of long continued fighting on the Frontier, wars on a small scale), but that India has been the scene of constant sporadic disorder directed against the British and increasingly necessitating the use of military.

Of course, in Europe or America, if a country is in the habit of staging violent riots every now and then in almost every city, resulting in a few or a hundred thousand dead and martial law for several days—it is headline stuff, and nobody talks too much

about internal peace and order. You refer instead to the instability of the Balkans or the crime wave in Chicago, according to the location of the trouble.

"You can't," continued my nice friend, "even think of India as a country. It is a vast subcontinent . . ." Just about there I remembered. Naturally his words sounded familiar. Phrase for phrase you read them not only in the encyclopædia, but in every book ever written about India by retired officials who have lived all their lives there; travelling journalists who really get most of their information from the officials who are living their lives there; and pedantic historians who provide us with so much inaccurate data about the past of India. Word, for word, every time. The only thing missing so far in the discourse was the story about the virgins and the rupees.

It was coming. "As Sir Pratap Singh, that grand old Rajput, said when asked what would happen if the British left India, in a fortnight not, etc., etc." I absorbed myself in meditation. When you have heard the same explanation over a thousand miles of travelling, at scores of dinner tables, on innumerable club verandas, you do, sometimes, get bored.

Especially when it doesn't quite fit what you see. India is a huge place, and it is full of different races and tongues—and yet you can travel over nearly all of India very comfortably with three languages, two of which, Urdu and Hindi, when used colloquially, are very like each other.

And while the Indian scene is infinitely varied from province to province, district to district, city to city, village to village, house to house . . . yet one cannot escape from an "Indianness", an intangible, yet very real something which makes anything from any part of India distinctively Indian as compared with, say, things Thibetan, things Singhalese, things Arabian, or things European.

India has never been a nation . . . but what, I reflected, IS a nation? A political entity or a racial entity? Europe, biassed largely by English political thought, confused the two until an American President with a magic phrase, also based on the English political conception of nation and race as one, called out from

all sorts of holes and corners the clamorous minority groups which have since kept the League of Nations so busy.

Then we all discovered that what had really been working as a nation was a politico-economic entity, whose racial unity was really based on ruthless suppression of the weaker races within its borders.

Had India, then, ever worked as a politico-economic what-is-it? To get at this question of nationality, it seemed one would have to spend a little time digging about in the scrap-heaps of the Past.

Gazing down the vista of centuries then, one soon perceives that no Westerner can tell just when civilization began in India. We just guess. We know that there are Sumerian remains, and we judge the Sumerians to have been at some time contemporary with the Assyrians—possibly having developed a culture before. We see, still, definite evidences of Dravidian culture—but how or what or why we really only guess. We talk gaily about "Aryan waves of invasion" and everybody fights about the date except the Indians themselves.

There were, however, two invasions which, according to India's own records, originated from some spot in the mountain table-land back of Kashmir—somewhere in the Pamirs possibly. The first wave certainly came down over what afterwards became the Yarkand Hoshiarpur trade route, through Baltistan, Kulu, and Kangra into the Punjab. The next may have come either through Kashmir proper, or over the Hindu Kush, as the Greeks did.

They fought their way slowly through India, often battling with the ancestors of the little Bhils and Khonds, gradually carving out lands for themselves. Settling, they became princes, small or large, and called themselves the "sons of kings," Rajputs, or the "Aryas", pure ones.

The interesting point about these invasions is that the invaders did very little in the way of extermination. Once they had established themselves, they let the other fellow live in his own way, merely asserting their superiority (because even in those days they had the superiority complex that you see in their

Western descendants today) by instituting caste. Caste was the then colour line, and on colour they also came to base rank and type of occupation. But—they went much further than the later Europeans, because they gave to every rank its rights and privileges.

The code of *Manu,* India's great law book, states that Dravidas, Yavanas (Greeks), Sakas (Scythians), Pahlavas (Persians), Kambojas (Thibetans, Siamese Burmese), and Sinas (Chinese), are sprung from Kshattriyas—the second highest caste—who forgot their religion and went astray. It speaks of Andhras (Deccan) and other apparently pre-Aryan races as outcasts and base-born. Also, inveighing strongly against mixed marriages, it mentions the castes formed in this way. This code in its latest version dates back to at least a thousand years B. C. and denotes a complete social structure at that time, to say nothing of clear knowledge of other and distant countries. It is interesting to remember the condition of Europe as a continent at that moment.

When Alexander and his Greeks arrived, they found a strong culture in full swing; India had given birth to its second great exposition of religious truth, Buddhism. The Greeks, it is interesting to note, hardly stayed any time in India proper. Some of Alexander's troops seem to have filtered down here and there and settled, but almost coincidentally with his death, about 321 B. C., Chandragupta Maurya arose and established the empire which was to reach its apogee in the person of the great Emperor Asoka who ruled for twenty-eight years from Afghanistan to Cape Comorin.

Before the Greeks, before Buddhism, India had developed a style of local self government which endured up to modern times, just as it had developed an amazingly modern system of town and village planning and an almost fool proof economic and social structure. That's what kept the country so stable through all disturbances and invasions, and gives a definite continuity to its culture.

For, together with caste, you find a real democracy in its only logical expression; that is, a series of village republics little

Ghazni and Aurangzeb, did break up temples and idols. The story of Mahmud and the temple of Somnath is well known. Refusing all bribes, Mahmud, in the name of Islam, broke the great idol of Somnath, and was rewarded by the discovery of a vast treasure of jewels about which he had probably had some information. Mahmud, like Nadir Shah, was in the looter class. Aurangzeb was definitely a bigot, and also wished to establish a strongly centralized government. As soon as he did this, the power of India broke the Moghals.

Clearer and clearer comes the picture. You see India invaded at fairly long intervals, as empires weaken and external defence suffers. You see the invading peoples themselves permeating the country, and in two generations, whenever they settle, becoming an integral part of the Indian pattern, the conquerors civilized by the conquered. When they came, as the Arabs did, with a culture of their own, it added to India and fused and changed.

You see that as long as Christianity was strong, its fanaticism, its intolerance, and its superiority complex, never permitted this—it destroyed other cultures, or, if this was not easily done, exterminated the cultured. Out of this comes a curious conclusion: religion in India, while it is and always has been the guiding, permeating force of all existence, was never really a political organization, never really arranged itself into politically self-conscious groups as it does now to some extent. But in Europe it has always been political.

Because it gained its first impetus among the poor and enslaved on the basis of an inferiority complex, it developed, naturally, and rapidly, a superiority complex—Christians as God's Chosen People inheriting the earth—which only in recent years, as Christianity weakened, shifted its basis to that of race—a primitive but an equally ignorant conception.

In India, the racial bias very soon lost ground. It was expressed once and for all in the caste system, but centuries before Christ, that had become really a social-economic distinction. Islam never permitted racial distinction; it is strictly a religion of international brotherhood.

In India, great empires rose and fell. When they fell, they broke up into small states which strove for supremacy among themselves. We have seen the same process in Europe with our own eyes—Austria Hungary falling and breaking up into small States, all struggling for supremacy, even to the point of arms, as when Rumania grabbed Transylvania. We have seen Russia fall and divide into small republics, federated as the USSR. We have seen Poles, Italians, French, all grabbing territory back. We have seen a great European civilization explode into fearful war, and now watch it slowly disintegrate.

An even older and greater civilization, that of China, we are watching dissolve into chaos.

And we see, in Europe, great statesmen, far visioned, planning some kind of unity—a federated Europe—which the very peoples who cast reproaches at India on the score of disunity, reject!

The truth about the matter is that India, like Europe, has suffered its invasions, its internal troubles and disruptions—all part of any people's evolution—but it has also a strong unifying force in its culture and spiritual aspiration which is in many respects far more well rooted than that of Europe. It has been united under one rule much more often than Europe. When you look carefully over its history you see that its internal wars were clan wars, dynastic wars, rather than religious or racial wars.

Such wars were conducted by a few people, and really mattered to comparatively few people. Fundamental India was not much affected; there was nothing, for instance, as drastic and terrible as the crushing of the textile industry by the British, or the economic devastation caused in Madras and Bengal by British land policy.

Not only was no culture ever quite lost in India, but when it was not absorbed altogether, it lived side by side with other cultures, reacting upon them, and in turn reacted upon by them. Take the old *Naga* worship which exists fully in the Himalayas. In the Plains, the descendants of the snake worshippers are really the snake charmers of today. You send for them to root your cobras out, and you send to the jungle for snake-wise people,

worshippers of *Naga* to come and cure your snake bite by their own particular *mantra* and rites. So the cobra remains sacred among Hindus and even respected by Muslims.

The group which gives its name to a given part of India is not necessarily the majority group. Rajputana, for instance, is ruled by Rajputs, but it includes masses of other peoples. Hindi is the usual tongue there, but in some States Urdu is the court language. Certain Hill States, ruled by Rajputs, also use Urdu as their official language. Down in Gujerat, Kathiawar, and Bombay, many Muslims use Gujerati as much as Urdu. A great deal of colloquial Bengali sounds like corrupt Urdu.

You find States where Muslims rule, while forming only ten per cent of the population. You find other States where the position is reversed. You find Muslims a majority group on the Frontier, in western Punjab, in Sind, and in eastern Bengal. Everywhere else they are a minority group, sometimes almost indistinguishable even in dress, from surrounding Hindus. In Mewar, Sirohi, Idar, Polo, and similar States you find strong groups of Bhils getting on quite happily among Rajputs and other peoples, retaining their identity and much of their mode of living.

Thus, while the trend of history in Europe has been towards political and geographical separation of groups into what they call "nations," and whose excuse is really a rather thin one of "racial grouping"—the much more modern trend of Indian history has been towards amalgamation, people all living closely mixed up, side by side, retaining their individuality, sometimes clashing locally, but not so very much, not intermarrying much, though India's subcastes prove a slow infiltration of caste by caste, group by group, but all speaking to each other, dealing with each other, dividing up the work of the country between themselves.

The conditions making this possible were, as I have repeatedly pointed out, an immense amount of local self-government, toleration, and the caste system, together with a highly developed culture. The extraordinary spell India casts over those who live there is further shown by the astonishing fact that Indians never

invaded or tried to conquer other countries—and yet exercised a greater spiritual and cultural influence over foreign countries than the world has ever known.

Only by comparing what one might call the cultural essence of India with the cultural essence of Europe, does one manage to penetrate through what at first sight seems an infinite variation, and realize that this variation is not nearly so much one of kind as one of stage, of degree, as it were. From Europe to India you go from one world to another; from, say Bhil to Brahmin, you only go from one millennium to several millenniums ahead. The process is not nearly such a difficult one as the Europe-India transition, though neither of them are impossible.

With the coming of the British, a curious process began. To get anywhere, the British had to intrigue, setting State against State, religion against religion. They had to accentuate the disorder which had begun to prevail in India, as it periodically does everywhere prior to a general step forward or a change of any kind. Other Western nations did the same thing, but the British were cleverer about it and got more support from their home government.

In this way all their conquests were made with the help of Indians: Hyderabad against Mysore; Rajputs and Sikhs against Marathas; Sikhs and Rajputs against Muslims; and so forth. Uniting India politically under their rule, they were obliged to take care not to allow Indians themselves to unite, and so you find such procedures as those regulating the conduct of Indian Princes, who may not communicate officially directly with each other or form alliances.

The disorder they thus accentuated was then used by the British of the East India Company as an excuse for their conduct, and especially their annexations, to the oft protesting Board of Directors in England. And so you find, in European histories of India, a tendency to stress periods of disorder in India and Indian struggles, to the point of really giving a false set of values and implications. In dealing with European history, for instance, you do not find the Hundred Years War, Thirty Years

"Bhils, the Aboriginal Inhabitants of India, Waiting to Beat Up a Tiger."

War, Wars of the Roses, Napoleonic campaigns so accentuated as even to hint that European inability to stabilize demonstrates, say, a crying need for American intervention and rule.

Time went on. The British themselves came sincerely to believe in the picture thus presented. What is more amusing is that, as indigenous educational systems decayed, and Western education became, for a time, the only kind to be had, Indians themselves grew up in this belief, one of the bases of their inferiority complex. Very, very few people ever stopped to ask whether it was absolutely essential for India to be a "nation" in the English sense of the word. Fewer yet realized anything of that strange cultural power underlying everything Indian, providing its true essential unity.

As I indicated in another chapter, when the first Hindu-Muslim conflicts of any magnitude started, the Hindus deliberately went for the Muslims primarily on the score of their loyalty to the British, only secondarily on a religious basis. The religious issue was, in fact, just a good way of maddening them. Moreover, the Hindus who did this represented a small, if powerful, Brahmin group, not Hinduism as a whole.

Again, in the light of false historical values and false psychology, the British misunderstood this, and insisted upon the impossibility of Hindu-Muslim peace to the point where Mr. Montague, in his Reforms scheme, perpetuated and accentuated it by providing separate electorates. Immediately, of course, every minority group in India became self-conscious, exactly as "self-determination of small nations" and minority treaties caused endless trouble and disturbance in Europe.

To assert that the British either created these differences, or that they deliberately and maliciously accentuate and perpetuate them is, as far as any impartial observer can see, grossly unfair. In any group of people, the possible basis for difference increases in exact ratio to their number and diversity. Among the Musalmans of India, backward economically and educationally at a disadvantage, there is a genuine basis for timidity. Among the Hindus, the nationalist movement, initiated by the Theosophical

Society and carried on so ably for many years by Mrs. Besant, began with a cultural revival of Hinduism, leading to dreams of a Hindu Raj. These conditions are explosive material.

Nothing, however, can excuse the ignorance which led to such a mistake as that of Montague in making it politically and materially advantageous to crystallize groups and stress their differences. Nor can anything palliate the gross ignorance of Indian social structure and political background which led both Mr. Montague and such Indian advisers as he had, to attempt the introduction of an wholly English parliamentary system, with its emphasis upon a Central Legislature and Central Government rather than upon very extensive local self-government working even as far as the Districts are concerned, and leading to something like federal relationship with the Central Government.

"But what about India now?" comes the inevitable query. "Can anyone agree? Is there anything like a sense of India as a whole among Indians."

If you go to England, and among the higher classes you ask a man what he is, he will say, "I'm an Englishman." But if you go into remoter rural areas and ask a peasant (agricultural labourer is the modern term) what he is, he will answer, "A Sussex man—a Lancashire man—a Cornishman," as the case may be. Carry this further, and in a mixed gathering of any rank ask the same question and you will hear, "An Englishman—a Welshman—a Scot."

Go to India, and you will hear the more highly educated Indian talk about, "We, Indians," *vis á vis* the British. *Vis á vis* each other, you will hear, "We Muslims, we Hindus, we Rajputs." Among the peasantry you will hear, "I'm a Punjabi—a Lucknawi—a Madrassi—etc." Going closer yet, among Musalmans you may hear, "I'm Syed—Afghan, etc.," among Hindus, "Girassia—Marwari—Kattrya," and so on. That is the answer to the "sense of India as a whole" question.

The answer to questions about Indian internal relations is that—Inshallah!—India can never be standardized—that is, brought to a uniform model of a nonexistent Indian, in the sense that America Americanizes foreigners to a uniform model of a

nonexistent American. Were this to happen, it would entail a cultural and social disaster affecting the entire world to its loss.

There is no reason at all why uniformity of language, for instance, should be considered necessary. *Lingua francas* have always existed and developed in India. Urdu-Hindi are *lingua francas;* "memsahib's Hindustani" is another, unacknowledged, one; English has come to be, to a lesser extent, also a *lingua franca.* One does not observe the European League of Nations using Esperanto.

Differences will continue to exist, and to enrich India's cultural life and production—which is the true measure of a peoples importance in the world. Political differences, in any people, are a sign of healthy growth and interest; but it would seem unlikely that those of India would necessarily continue in their present form when the transitional period is over, and when inherently false emphases are dispelled. In course of adjustment, some disturbance and even bloodshed may occur, it has occurred in every country in the world during similar periods, and should be viewed from that angle.

Externally, there is very little reason for not imagining that India can and must and will conduct its relations as a unity just as America does. Its geographical position and its economic interests make this inevitable. And with all their mistakes, all their misconceptions, the hot and bothered British strenuously denying "India as a nation," strenuously insisting upon "lack of unity," are, in fact, unconsciously developing among Indians a conscious political sense of "Indian-ness" to which history will probably point, one day, as Britain's greatest gift to India.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

FROM UPSTAIRS LOOKING DOWN

AND while they busily tell you how pernicious it is, the caste system has got the British in India just as thoroughly as it has the most orthodox Hindu. Moreover, it is the result of a deliberate policy, whose consequences are but little understood, and whose loosening is still lamented by all the dear old Die-Hards in all the service clubs of England and India.

Rude vernacular, and swarajist papers call the British in India "White Brahmins"—alluding to the stiff pride and arrogance which has, to some extent, become associated with that caste—and accuse them of "living behind an invisible *pardah*" which cuts them off from all real knowledge of, and sympathy with, the country. The British themselves talk about "prestige" and in the name of prestige their curious social structure has evolved.

Really it is both a pathetic and a comic picture. Right in the heart of the most mysterious and enchanting part of Asia—in that India whence so much marvellous knowledge and culture have come—about a hundred thousand essentially middle-class English people have been set down, with a view to governing 308 million Indians. Confronted with so much that they are psychologically incapable of understanding, desperately anxious to preserve their identity, they have set up a defense mechanism which really amounts to a denial of India's social existence, and a built-up superiority complex.

These people are not the real empire builders or the great geniuses who have contributed knowledge to the world. They are the cogs in the machine; the poor little bureaucrats who are

both its upholders and its victims. When great geniuses like Burton or Gertrude Bell arise, they are regarded with suspicion amounting to dislike by the bureaucrats because they do so upset the even tenor of their way, and they know far too much about the Oriental, to the point of being too friendly with him.

Thus you have the amazing spectacle of Richard Burton. Asked to make an intelligence report on Sind, going out and living among the people in disguise, eventually he turned in what was perhaps the most complete, and the finest, account ever written. Dealing minutely with customs, thought, and vices, its frankness and clinical detail so shocked his superior officers that Burton's career was irretrievably damaged. "No nice person," said the British, "could possibly find out things like that." And so, as the world knows, Burton finished, not as Governor of Sind, but stuck away in some obscure consulate where he would corrupt nobody's morals.

Such, to a certain extent, is still the general mentality. One mustn't, as a general rule, become too interested in the life about one. It would never do. Such folk are liable to become "pro-Indian," just as men living too much with the Arabs become "pro-Arab" and a nuisance.

How, one asks oneself, do the British get that way? How do they manage to shut themselves off so completely from the world around them, and thus make every one of their stations in India a little bit of middle-class suburban England? How do they manage, a hundred thousand of them, to rule so vast a country while remaining, in reality, so marvellously ignorant of all that it really is, all that it really feels?

Finally comes the haunting question: Is British rule really good for India? What have they done for the country?

The answer to either of these questions depends entirely upon your own point of view, and upon the accuracy of your historical knowledge. For very few, if any, English histories of India give the true story properly emphasized. And very few Indian propagandists can remain sufficiently calm to see the whole thing practically.

The motive for Western eruption into India—British,

French, Dutch, Portuguese—was completely sordid. No idealism of any sort was involved. They came to make money, by means of trade. India was, as early travel records show, extraordinarily wealthy and highly cultured. There were poor, but fewer poor than in Europe. Food, says Tavernier, travelling in India in the 17th century, was plentiful everywhere.

In order to get a chance to trade, these early Europeans were willing to crawl before the princes and kings of India. Somewhere about 1695, for instance, you find an account by one Fleetwood of his visit to the then ruler of Burma. With him he took instructions not to avenge any insult or injury, but respectfully to ask for government help in such emergencies; to inform himself of the custom of the country and demean himself accordingly, and, most strictly, not to perform any action which might appear insulting or affronting to the natives, "for they are excessive proud and will not bear it".

Reaching the gate of the garden wherein the King was, Mr. Fleetwood and his companion waited patiently for fifteen minutes or so. As soon as the gate opened they fell upon their knees and bowed three times. Half-way to the King, they repeated this exercise, and, upon reaching his presence, fell down and bowed some more. The King then bade them be seated. They handed their letters to a minister, and engaged in polite conversation for another fifteen minutes, after which the King dismissed them and they went away "supplicating Heaven for His Majesty's continued health and prosperity."

Thus, by means of rich presents and humble bearing, a footing was gained. In justice to the British, it must be said that this first footing was not in that part of India most calculated to impress them favourably. Bengal, especially, while a very rich country, has always produced, among others, a rather effeminate, unpleasing type. Moreover, among the proud and sensitive Indians, who would be likely to enter the service not only of Mlechhas, outcast barbarians, but of traders at that? And of traders whose consciences fainted and died before the golden dream of wealth.

The history of the West *vis-á-vis* the East has been, from

the Crusades until recent times, largely one of treachery, but above all of sheer greed and rapacity. To this the Honourable East India Company proved no exception. There was no treachery, no intrigue, no torture, no extortion to which it did not resort at one time or another in order to gain money—more money—power to get more money yet.

No one can read the detailed, authenticated accounts of "John Company" rule in India—and such accounts written by Englishmen do exist, though some are proscribed books in India to this day—without shame. One begins by excusing one's fellow Westerners on the score of the times. They were bad times. England was going through a period of grossness and debauchery, of greed and misrule, such as caused the American colonists, infinitely better treated than the Indians, to revolt against the English yoke. India, too, helped by the Europeans, had entered upon a period of political crisis and some disorder.

Moreover, India was very far away. No one was likely to go out there if another avenue offered itself. The men who did go drank hard, lived hard, injured their health, and, if they did not die, went home enormously wealthy but stricken with fever, and more often than not, with cirrhosis of the liver. At first, no women went, and the men found mistresses among the class existing for that purpose, or very low castes. A very, very few married, so that today the blood of an Indian begam runs in the veins of some of the titled families of England.

Like locusts, they ate up everything on their path, so that, by 1857, though they then held a good deal of India, in spite of all the prosperity they had found there, the government had already reached its more or less chronic state of financial difficulty—with a deficit of almost eight million dollars. Today, incidentally, the Public Debt of India is something well over twenty-nine billion dollars, and during the former Non-coöperation period—1919 to 1923—budget deficits amounted to nearly three billion. In its boom financial year, 1927, this was changed to a surplus of almost ninety million. By 1930, however, the picture was again one of gloom and stringency.

By 1856, Bengal and Madras were in a very bad way. Mil-

lions of acres were out of cultivation, the people crushed and wretched, noble families ruined, and peasantry more or less starving. Russell, in *My Diary in India,* written about that time, says he feels:

> A grave, unhappy doubt whether India is the better for our rule so far as regards the social condition of the great mass of the people. We have put down widow-burning, we have sought to check infanticide; but I have travelled hundreds of miles through a country peopled with beggars and covered with wigwam villages.

Describing the average British official of those days, he remarks:

> I could not help thinking . . . how harsh the reins of our rule must feel to the soft skin of the natives. The smallest English official treats their prejudices with contempt, and thinks he has a right to visit them, just as he would call on a gamekeeper in his cottage. Lord Clyde and others have said they were often pained by the insolence and rudeness of some of the civilians to the sirdars and chiefs of the northwest (then the Punjab) after the old war. Some of the best of our rulers administer justice in their shirt sleeves (which by the way are used as a substitute for blotting paper all over India) cock up their heels in the tribunal, and smoke cheroots to assist them in the Council; and I have seen one eminent public servant, with his braces hanging at his heels and his shirt open at the breast, his bare feet in slippers just as he came from the bath, give audience to a great chieftain on a matter of considerable State importance. The natives see that we treat each other far differently and draw their inferences accordingly. . . .

W. H. Torrens, M. P., in his book *Our Empire in Asia,* draws a picture almost every line of which is fully documented, largely from official minutes and despatches, of greed, intrigue, corruption and treachery almost too painful to contemplate. Henry Mead, in his *Sepoy Revolt* states that:

> for examples of broken faith, violated laws, and systematic oppression, the government of India is able to challenge the Universe.

Mead, in the same book, puts his finger on one of the fundamental weaknesses of British policy in India when he deplores

the fact that the British were conquerors, not colonists. "It is an evil thing," he remarks,

> for the people of India, that he (the British arrival) leaves his household gods and his sympathies in the land of his fathers. Had he chosen to take root in the soil of India fifty years ago, we should by this time have had railways in some districts, and good roads everywhere.

In the light of this apparently authentic picture of British rule in India, the Mutiny becomes perfectly explicable. The British were sitting on a powder magazine of misery, discontent, and disaffection. So inefficient, so utterly divorced from the people, were their rulers that the rising came as a dreadful surprise. From their point of view it was treacherous ingratitude on the part of Britain's beneficiaries.

The plot, as a matter of fact, was really less widespread than historians picturesquely imagine. But once a section of the army rose, rebellion spread like wildfire. That, in spite of every conceivable form of muddling, it could be so easily suppressed was, owing to the fact that the rebels were so little organized, and to the support of many princes and chiefs who had sworn allegiance to the British. A third factor also militated in the British favour, and that was Nicholson's immense personal influence in the North.

In consequence of the Mutiny and all it disclosed, the East India Company was abolished, and India taken over by the Crown. Between them, Disraeli, "the charlatan Jew", and Queen Victoria accomplished a stroke of genius, which has kept India for the British over a long period. That stroke was the assumption of the Imperial Crown of India by the Queen, together with the Proclamation which was taken by India as its Magna Carta.

For in it, the Queen Empress reaffirmed the principle that none of her subjects in India should be debarred by race, creed or colour from any office in her services in India. It had already been laid down in 1833 and 1853, but without much effect.

The Queen Empress caught the imagination and the heart of India. To this day she is loved and revered as no Westerner

has ever been. Try and criticize her in any way and see what happens to you. "She was a great and a good woman," say the Indians, "and she really loved us." The last phrase is particularly significant, in view of the current British idea that India is held by strength and justice, in that order, completely omitting what is most powerful in the Indian psychology, affection bringing loyalty.

What the British Crown took over was a wrecked, bankrupt concern. A good deal of the history of the British in India since then has been an unspoken, even an unrealized, attempt to repair the frightful mischief done by John Company. Unfortunately proceedings have been hampered from the start, because it was impossible for Britain to do what any business expert would do in like circumstances—fire all the officials of the former régime.

From that day to this, British rule in India has often been characterized by two opposing influences—liberal policies initiated from England, or by some particularly far-sighted Secretary of State or Viceroy, quietly and steadily evaded or nullified by the powerful inheritors of "British traditions" and "service traditions" in India. So you find the British Parliament, in 1870, passing an act requiring the Governor General to make the necessary regulations for admitting Indians into the Covenanted Service without examination, and the Government of India calmly ignoring Parliament's will for something like eight years and then, equally calmly, proposing to close the Covenanted Service to Indians.

This incident caused Lord Lytton to write, in answer:

> Since I am writing confidentially, I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and India appear to me, up to the present moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear.

What tradition and what mentality have the British in India inherited from Mutiny days?

Not, as history shows, their present tradition of personal incorruptibility. That is one of the many reforms brought about

after the Mutiny. Unquestionably, however, their attitude of moral superiority, and the fixed idea that their rule, because it is their rule, is the best India could possibly have. That conviction had become part of their make-up long before 1857.

For men rarely engage upon evil courses frankly admitting them to be evil, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century the British had convinced themselves, as good Christian gentlemen, that every time they pushed a prince off his throne and grabbed some more territory—to say nothing of the local jewels and treasure—they were snatching Indian brands from the burning. They developed, in fact, a "mission of light" complex, though it did not go much further than actually placing as much of India as possible under British rule. This became their excuse, and has remained their excuse until the present day. Consequently, anyone who might oppose them became, automatically, devilish.

Only very occasionally such men as Macaulay or Lord Birkenhead have candidly declared that England holds India for England's good. The majority of the British in India, confronted with this statement, are sincerely horrified, almost to the point of considering it seditious.

Another inherited tradition, also a conscience soother, is, in effect, that India is really not quite of this world. Nothing happening in India, except Russian intrigue, has any relation to anything happening elsewhere. Hence only the British in India are fitted to rule India or decide policies for India. Hence, again, it is morally wrong to criticize them.

There is, of course, no public opinion in India—the British official tells you. But there is an inherited policy of suppressing books and newspapers, not only for their opinions, but for the publication of news items undesired by the government, which might alarm or inflame the public opinion which doesn't exist.

In 1857, for instance, you find a Press Gagging Act enforced by the Government of India, whereby all printing presses, types, etc., must be licensed, and such licenses are granted on the following conditions, among others:

That no book, newspaper, pamphlet, or other work printed at such press etc. shall contain any observations of statements impugning the motives or designs of the British Government either in England or India, or in any way tending to bring said Government into hatred or contempt, excite disaffection, unlawful resistance to its orders, weaken its lawful authority etc.

That no book etc. shall contain observations etc. having a tendency to create alarm or suspicion among the native population of any intended interference by Government with their religious opinions and observances.

That no such book etc. shall contain observations having a tendency to weaken the friendship toward the British Government of native princes, chiefs or states in dependence with or alliance with it.

The above conditions apply equally to original matter and to matter copied from other publications.

Under the provisions of this Act all possible criticism could be stifled, and most of it was. The *Friend of India* was warned for stating that the British had deposed the kings and ruined the nobles of India (Par. 3 of the Act), for too candidly summarizing the past of the East India Company (Par. 1) and for suggesting that, given a little decent rule and some attempt at uplift among the peasantry, the second centenary of Plassey might be celebrated in Bengal by a respected government and a Christian population (Par. 2).

The Dacca News came next with an article criticizing the policy governing land tenure by Europeans in India. The *Hurkaru* was suppressed for criticizing government inefficiency during the Mutiny. An item in the *London Times*, regarding the mutiny of some troops in Desa, and their destruction by a loyal regiment, was prohibited from republication in *Bombay Presidency*.

Something like this Act has been enforced ever since in India, so that suppression and prosecution of newspapers, and proscription of books on one of these counts is almost a daily affair there, and it is said that actively seditious papers retain a salaried "prison editor" who goes to jail whenever necessary. But since simple suppression and jail are not sufficient, newspapers can be required to deposit bonds for their good behaviour.

Such policies are absolutely necessary on the part of conquerors in a conquered country. Nor is there any denying the fact that vernacular and swarajist papers are often recklessly venomous, and that the British often allow them to go far before taking steps to end the matter, provided times are peaceful. Nevertheless, the tradition is a bad one, both for British and Indians, accentuating the "divine right" mentality on the one hand, and fear and dislike on the other. No news is really prevented from circulating, because the grapevine telegraph works very much faster than any newspaper.

The race line between British and Indians had already been accentuated by the arrival of European women, before the Mutiny. The women put a stop to the *"bibi khana,"* the practice of taking Indian mistresses, thus depriving the British of a valuable source of information and knowledge regarding the country. Their perfectly normal reaction to India was expressed in an attempt to create "a home from home" for their men—to prevent them from being caught and charmed by the country whose spell they vaguely felt and actively feared.

The men, on the other hand, quite naturally felt that if the Indians would not bring their wives before them, they were justified in not admitting the Indians into their homes. It has, to this day, only dawned upon very few British that they have only to make the condition explicit in sufficiently high circles, to deliver a crushing blow against the whole *pardah* system. Instead of which, forced by the march of events to receive Indians, at least officially, the British are, today, obliged to submit to the very conditions they so rightly demurred over, and you see Englishwomen appearing at banquets, etc., given by Indians whose wives, and whose native guests' wives are not present.

The Mutiny turned this smoldering dislike and contempt into active hatred, cutting the British off entirely from social relations with Indians of any class. Today, when the official word has gone forth commanding friendly relations, Indians are formally received, but there is very little real friendship and practically no intimacy, especially between the women of the two races, except in a few individual cases. Moreover the Nationalist move-

ment has accentuated resentment between the two races quite markedly.

Social experiments between the two races have not been extremely happy. Delhi is better in this respect than any other city, just as the higher officials in India are, as a general rule, more far-sighted, better educated and nicer people socially than local ones. But the British are naturally a bad-mannered and an awkward race, and they are apt to tread heavily upon Indian corns. On the other hand, the Indians they are obliged to receive most often are necessarily those in official positions, and these are not always the best specimens of Indian culture.

That this should be so, and that so many Indian officials should be jacks-in-office, sometimes corrupt and inefficient, is again due to early British policy. Unlike the Russian Imperial policy, which insisted upon cultivating close relations, even to marriage, with the upper classes of the country in which their officials were placed, the British traders, fearing the nobles and the upper classes, did their best to weaken and destroy them. Also—these were the people who had money and estates worth confiscating.

Consequently in the shadow of the British such people withered, whereas a class which had never before had power—the class of petty scriveners, traders, and above all money-lenders, flourished and waxed powerful. Nothing could stop them. Not only were they unscrupulous, and therefore useful to the British in those days, but in later days, when British rule was reformed, insufficient pay and over-luxurious standards of living only too often put the young British official into their power.

A young man comes out to India. He finds himself obliged, on the score of prestige, to have a certain establishment. He has to belong to the Club, or more than one club. He must have some exercise, some sport, tennis, cricket and polo if possible. Everything is on the *chithi* system—you sign for your drinks, your food, your supplies, your clothes, etc., and the bill come in at the end of the month. Such a system is insidious. It is all too easy to live above one's income, and all too difficult to live within it.

In times of stress the money-lender is ubiquitous, and all too willing to wait for his money—at an excessive rate of interest. Today the *babu,* the *bannia,* the *shroff,* and the lawyer, drawn from these classes in many cases, hold the reins of power in India.

Furthermore, in India everything has a tendency to crystallize into hereditary groups. From the very beginning of British rule, Indians have been in government service, in subordinate posts. The whole "Indianization" fight concerns the higher, controlling offices, which the British fervently desire to keep for themselves. Obviously the mentality of the class used to government service, with very limited scope, bad pay, and so forth, is not of the most attractive. A rotten tradition of corruption and pettiness has been set up in it, by reason of its conditions.

Reforms in the Indian services have placed a yet wider gulf between the two races, making it well-nigh impossible for the British official really to know much personally of the people he rules. In the old days a man spent years in one District. Home leave was rather scarcer, the voyage took so much time and was very expensive. But the official's pay and his travelling allowance, as well as his work, permitted of his touring the District during the cold weather, camping here and there, and keeping in personal touch with conditions.

Today, as government becomes more and more centralized and bureaucratic, the individual's personal authority is far less. He is overwhelmed by paper work. He can't afford, owing to higher living costs and to money depreciation, such luxuries as camping tours. His average is a few hasty dashes in a motor. Nor does he stay long enough in one District to become really acquainted with it. About every three years he gets Home leave, and on his return is transferred somewhere else.

That officials are as efficient as they are under such conditions is greatly to their credit. The system is bound to make thorough knowledge of local peculiarities, even of the language, almost impossible, rendering the British official more and more dependent upon his *babu,* or head clerk, for such things as translations, etc. So well is this point realized by the Indians that they say:

"We are not governed by the British, but by their *babus*." Also it is certain to develop the spirit of *carpe diem* which is so noticeable nowadays among the British in India. "Anything to avoid trouble until my time is up."

Under such a system, together with the policy of alternating good and inefficient officials in a given District, it becomes difficult to do more than a routine job, especially in a slowly moving country like India. The efficient are penalized, and the inefficient get by; instead of being fired they are transferred. So bureaucratic rule tends in this manner to a dead level of mediocrity, and the British themselves become more and more part of a machine which cannot be reached by the people.

But the machine reaches the people. And it becomes something like a god, not a very popular god at that—a troublesome one, a satanic one. The thing that saved the British during the Mutiny—personal loyalty and affection gained by certain great individuals—is now deliberately thrown away.

Today the British hold India by fear—fear of substituting King Stork for King Log; fear of armed force on the part of a totally disarmed people; fear of an extremely efficient secret police, the C. I. D. (Criminal Investigation Department), which is political also. There is also an element of loyalty to the King Emperor's person, but not very much affection for the British bureaucracy and even less confidence in it.

Among the British themselves one remarks a tendency towards half-heartedness and bewilderment, mixed with a large measure of exasperation. They know very little of the truth about their past in India. Therefore it is not easy for them to understand where they have blundered, or to what extent they are reaping the harvest sown by their ancestors. As far as modern thought, modern trends of feeling and modern ideals go, most of them have had too little culture in the first place, and too little contact with the outer world, to grasp the fact that intellectually they are so often fifty to seventy-five years out of date.

Actually, few of them know what Indians are howling about. They see roads, though not a very good road system except in

certain parts of Punjab; they see railroads; they see canals and marvellous irrigation works; they see hospitals, again few good ones but still something—all the work of their hands, and wonder why India is not more grateful. They still believe themselves superior by race and birth, and wonder why the Indian resents them so bitterly. Finally, when the general disturbance becomes too much for them to handle, they make pathetic attempts, still governed by the idea that what is good for England is good for everyone, to transplant into India British governmental institutions which have failed everywhere but in England. As these, worked by incredulous officials and angry Indians, drift on the rocks, they wonder what is wrong with India to cause such a failure.

The British in India today are to be pitied more than blamed. Every one of them is the product of a system, ground by the system into its own mould. Dull, middle-class, worthy, their social life is unattractive to anyone but themselves. Outside of their work, they have few mental resources, especially the women, so they are forced to live a deadening, externalized life— a round of sport, pegs, intrigue and scandal among themselves, dances, pegs, official dinners, picnic, pegs and so on.

At the end of twenty or thirty years service they return to England, retired, to live on insufficient pensions, amid colonies of their own kind, club bores, lamenting the good old days. For the better part of their lives they have been little tin gods, to meet, in the end, the fate of little tin gods—the rubbish heap.

As conquerors and looters, they were tremendously successful. Regarding their government of India from a more modern point of view, the general social progress of the people . . . it is still just possible that with the leadership of some great man, such as Lord Irwin, they may redeem a failure. Stupid, irritating, narrow as the British in India so often are, if, because of them, as well as in spite of them, India attains self-government within Imperial protection, in historic perspective they will have succeeded magnificently in paying magnificently their historic debt.

How many fond illusions they must drop in order to do this;

all ideas of race superiority, all ideas of cultural superiority, all hope of thanks or reward in their generation except that which exists in the doing of the deed. Above all, they must convince India of their sincerity.

For India neither believes them, nor has it much historic ground on which to base belief in them.

As things stand, the coming of the British was a frightful disaster for India. For England to continue the old tradition would be not only criminal, but mad folly. Yet, for England to abandon India at this juncture would be an even more criminal disaster. They must help to re-integrate the land their forebears did so much to destroy.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FREEDOM BY BOMB

WATCHING the procession of events across the Indian stage, one wonders how much of the Indian nationalist movement owes its success to constitutional methods, how much to British sense of justice, and how much to the dark underlying forces of terrorism. It seems so sadly comic that one should so often be obliged to throw bombs at people in order to convince them that you mean what you say.

Never was there a country in which things work out with such lucent inevitability, until you get the sense of watching a screen play through which the unknowing shadows pass, directed by an invisible voice. It goes on and on, and everything is so exactly the result of what came before that in the end you rise, a little frightened, ready to deny your own vision.

First, then, two figures. Strange pilgrims these, from the ends of the earth, a Russian woman with visions, and an American colonel following her. Caption: Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott arrive in India seeking Mahatmas. They meet Swami Dayananda, Founder of the Arya Samaj.

Scene after scene flashes by. It is sometime in 1883: the place Adyar, near Madras. A little group of less than a score of men and women earnestly engaged in discussion. Caption: Mr. Hume, of the Indian Civil Service, and members of the Theosophical Society hold the first meeting of the Congress Party, demanding reforms in the government of India giving greater scope to Indians.

Fade out, and close up. A woman with a magnificent head and glowing, blue eyes. The moulding of the jaw is, when you look at it closely, rather strong. The nose is short, the mouth

not badly cut. The body is not tall, but sturdily made. In that steady gaze, there is a definite suggestion of power, in that broad forehead an indication of command. Caption: Mrs. Annie Besant arrives in India. For something like half a century she will be the unquestioned autocrat of the Theosophical Society, swing its interest towards Hinduism, and play a leading part in the Indian fight for Dominion Status.

Scene: Mrs. Besant facing the representatives of the British Government who appear slightly bewildered and indecisive. She is speaking. Caption: "You may not like it, but I am doing this for your own good." From now on the Indian screen play is recurrently interspersed with slightly comic scenes between Mrs. Besant, the Government of India, and the British Parliament. Mrs. Besant arriving periodically in London with plans for a Commonwealth of India. Mrs. Besant as periodically turned down. Mrs. Besant having her mail opened by the C. I. D. and protesting loudly. Mrs. Besant having her paper put under bond. Mrs. Besant thrown into gaol for sedition. Mrs. Besant thrown out again. And back of it all, the movement steadily growing.

Almost exactly ten years after the founding of the Congress Party at Adyar, the first "direct action" society began to function in Poona. Appropriately enough it called itself "The Society for the Removal of Obstacles to the Hindu Religion," and, spurred on by Gangadhar Tilak's violent anti-British articles in his paper *The Kesari,* it proceeded to remove a couple of British officials, Mr. Rand and Lieutenant Amherst, as they returned from a Government House reception at Poona.

Tilak is one of the famous names in the Indian nationalist movement. It was never possible to pin any terrorist affiliations on him, except in so far as the bitterness and violence of his writings may have inspired such groups. He was a Chitpavan Brahmin, of that very fair, often blue eyed group existing in Western Deccan, which at one time furnished rulers for that part of the country. The Chapekar brothers who founded the Removal Society were also of his community.

Though these were the first openly political assassinations

since the Mutiny, it would seem that the conspiracy had already spread far. But it was not linked closely with international revolutionary circles as yet, though there were Hindus in Paris belonging to such groups. During the round up that followed the Rand murders, however, one Krishnavarma, a Kathiawari living in Bombay, decided that Europe would be a healthier spot in which to live.

In London, Krishnavarma met S. R. Rana of the Paris revolutionary group and together they organized a London circle. From that time on, the Indian revolutionaries became part of an international group. Through the foreign centres, recruits could be propagandized; and trained in revolutionary ethics and methods; bomb making, secret organization, mob psychology, etc.

It took another ten years for India to produce a revolutionary genius in the person of Arabindo Ghose, a young Bengali almost wholly brought up in England, where his brother, Barindra, was born. Graduating brilliantly from Cambridge, he found himself disqualified for the Indian Civil Service owing to failure in the riding test. The British infer that this misfortune made him a revolutionary, but the idea seems a little far fetched, and, in fact, he first went into Baroda State Service. It is far more likely that contact with the prejudices of the British in India, reacting upon a Western educated youth who had probably rather idealized the West, affected him adversely, as it so often affects Indians in a similar position.

Arabindo Ghose is unquestionably a genius, though perhaps not the sort of genius one would care to frequent. Among Indians, he is considered to be a master of kala yoga—black magic. Certainly he added several entirely new features to revolutionary practice. With the help of his brother, he made Bengal the real centre of the terrorist movement, whence it could spread over India.

Its technique is interesting. As a preliminary step, the country is mapped out in districts and circles within circles. An individual knows only his fellows of the same grade and the man immediately above him, his leader. This leader in turn only knows the next man immediately above and so on. In this way, while groups

here and there can be raided and broken up, the main network, and above all the central power, remains untouched. This, of course, is a hoary method. It was used by the Russian Nihilists, by the Carbonari, and almost every other revolutionary group known. Nothing better has so far been devised.

Obviously, the real leaders are never to be found in the "direct action" groups. The latter in India, usually call themselves athletic societies, whose object is to improve the physique of the nation as a patriotic duty. Their members are taught such things as *lathi* play—the Indian singlestick. A *lathi* is in reality a most formidable weapon, consisting of a length of bamboo, bound with brass and heavily weighted. Properly wielded, a man can be killed by a *lathi*. It is the usual weapon in Indian riots, on both sides.

Revolution in Europe is usually anti-religious. But in India, for anything to succeed, it must have a religious motive. This was one of Arabindo's discoveries. Subtly handling the teachings of Vivekananda, he drew therefrom the doctrine of karma yoga, redemption by actions. Vivekananda's master, Ramakrishna, was strictly Hindu and a Tantrik—a good deal of the Tantrik cult, in its less pure forms, was also available for use.

Thus the *Bhagavad Gîta,* together with Frost's *Secret Societies of the European Revolution, 1776 to 1876;* Mazzini's works; Eissler's *Handbook of Modern Explosives;* Bloch's *Modern Weapons and Modern War;* and various other textbooks in French and Russian, as well as especially written Indian books, became standard works for revolutionary training.

Tilak had long ago preached from the text of the *Bhagavad Gîta* as a justification for murder. In his part of the country, Marashthra, the revolutionaries had also taken Shivaji as their national hero. Shivaji was a Maratha bandit, whose utter daring and unscrupulousness brought him to the top as leader of his people against the Moghals. His most famous exploit was the murder of the Moghal General, Afzal Khan.

Arranging a meeting with him, Shivaji arrived apparently as unarmed as the Muslim, but unknown to the latter his hands concealed a most fearful weapon—the traditional "tiger claws."

The "tiger claws" are really claws of steel set on a strap of leather or metal which can be slipped over the knuckles, leaving the claws hidden in the palm of the hand.

As the two leaders embraced, Shivaji tore Afzal Khan's throat open, and so killed him. Tilak justified this baseness by stating that Shri Krishna advised Arjuna to kill even his own kinsmen if necessary, and that the *Bhagavad Gîta* lays down the maxim that no blame attaches to any person performing actions without any desire to reap their fruits. Shivaji, he said, murdered Afzal Khan wholly for the good of others. "If thieves enter our house," Tilak said, "and we have not sufficient strength to drive them out, we should without hesitation shut them up and burn the house."

No moderately rational person would consider this sort of logic worth an instant's attention—but it was not meant for rational people. It was meant for young students, undernourished, overworked victims of the rotten educational system initiated in India by the British themselves. That is where the awful fatality of the situation comes in. In Bengal, especially, where English education is most widely spread, it was introduced first in order to provide a supply of clerks and minor government employes, and was based on these necessities plus a grand contempt for Oriental culture and learning.

Consequently, the people attracted to such schools and universities were drawn from the class providing the hereditary scribes of India, and education at a university for long made a government post almost a certainty. As such education spread, and the Bengali was no longer the only competitor in the field, this class, disappointed, unemployed, economically straitened, became the most fertile field for revolutionary recruiting.

Year after year, these universities go on turning out useless young men, whose parents have sacrificed greatly to provide for them a useless education, while they themselves have permanently injured their own health trying to pass examinations on subjects whose purport they cannot properly understand because the courses are in a foreign language. Naturally the revulsion is great, and, in fact, one cannot deny that they have a case.

Agents of the terrorist movement are placed wherever possible in schools and colleges. Nor is it so very difficult to convert the schoolmasters. While the universities in India are not so badly equipped and built, the majority of municipal and government schools are terrible. A schoolmaster's pay averages between ten and thirty dollars or so a month, women teachers getting even less. Under such conditions, the profession is not overcrowded, and in any case, it is not one sought after by any man who can possibly achieve a better outlet.

An agent's first duty is to classify the boys of his school: those whose main interest is in their studies; those who are willing to venture anything, even at the risk of their lives; those who will give money only; and were sympathizers.

Once recruited, the student goes through a regular series of initiations under oath, dramatically staged either on some burning ground at midnight, or at dawn on some great festival in honour of the goddess Kali. Swearing secrecy and obedience as well as to keep his group leader in daily touch with his whereabouts, he calls down upon himself the curse of the Brahmins and of all great patriots should he fail.

A great deal of his work is outlined in a book, published in Bengali, called *Mukti Kon Pathe,* which is largely made up of Arabindo's articles in the *Jugantar* (*New Era*), a daily paper he ran for some time.

There the young revolutionary is instructed to raise funds by means of *dacoity* (housebreaking and highway robbery) "for the good of society," and told not only to further actively every and any political disturbance in the country, but to do his utmost to keep the people excited and upset. Thus, with the secret help of these societies, a man like Gandhi can always bring off a big procession and a good deal of rioting wherever he appears.

Arabindo Ghose began organizing seriously about 1904 or 5 and at the end of five years, not only was the whole of Bengal covered with his groups, but a flourishing headquarters for Western India existed at Nasik, as well as smaller groups in various parts of the Punjab and a lively centre in Nagpur, capital of the Central Provinces.

Meanwhile, the murder of Sir Curzon Wyllie in 1909 drew attention to the London group, and most of the leaders fled to Switzerland. With the outbreak of war, their centre shifted to Germany, and with the assistance of the German Consul, found active help and encouragement at the German Foreign Office. Virendranath Chattopaddhya, Mrs. Naidu's brother, became one of the leading Indian figures in German employ, and M. N. Roy, afterwards of the Third Internationale, crossed to America, there to work under direct orders from the German Embassy. Two other agents, by name Maulvi Barkatullah and Hardayal, were sent to California to work up agitation among the Indian labourers on the Pacific Coast.

Hardayal was very successful in organizing what is called the Hindustan Ghadr Party among the Sikhs, which is still the most dangerous secret society in Northern India. Under the able direction of the Germans, other centres for work upon India were formed in Siam, Java, Japan, and China, many of which have since been continued by Moscow. By 1916, conditions in India were alarming, and the curve of assassination reached as high as twenty-four in one year in Calcutta alone.

When life in British India became too hot for Arabindo, he fled to Pondicherry where he still runs an *ashrama,* teaching his own special brand of *yoga* to various dupes, including, it is said, one or two American women.

Meanwhile, the Congress founded by Hume and his friends had plodded steadily along on more constitutional and moderate lines. In 1907, however, the extremists had become so powerful that, led by Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Ajit Sing, it felt able to make a serious attempt to capture the organization. Gokhale, the greatest of all of India's political leaders, opposed it with the help of Mrs. Besant, and the Left Wing succeeded only splitting the Party for many years and depriving it of much of its power.

Mrs. Besant, the British Government's black sheep, incurred the wrath of the extremists, so that an attempt was made to weaken the Theosophical Society itself, which culminated in 1914, when every possible means was used to throw her out and replace

her by Rudolf Steiner, a Berliner, head of what came to be known as the Anthroposophical Society.

Though the war provoked an outburst of loyalty in India, and lives and money were contributed with lavish generosity by all classes and creeds, the terrorists were not discouraged. Like rats gnawing at the foundations, they went on devising plots which, if they were abortive, were in any case bound to leave discontent in their wake. For this purpose, their real hope was that, given a delicate, psychological situation, the British would be bound to do something rather stupid.

One of these stupid incidents is that known as the "Komagatu Maru" affair. A Sikh contractor in China decided that it would be a good idea to assist his colleagues to emigrate into Canada. Just what Gurdit Singh's real connections were it is difficult to say, and just why his friends in Canada, who must have known the emigration laws, encouraged him, is still harder to understand.

Anyhow, he chartered a ship the *Komagatu Maru,* filled it with Sikhs, and sailed for Vancouver. Upon arrival, however, the emigrants, who had never had the slightest chance of being admitted, were refused. But they in turn declined to go away. Two well known revolutionaries paid the balance of 22,000 dollars due for the hire of the ship, and all its passengers were immediately and thoroughly propagandized as to the value of their citizenship in the British Empire. Also arms were smuggled aboard.

After considerable strife, the ship set sail, and on arrival at Calcutta, the Sikhs, by this time thoroughly furious, declined to enter the special train provided for them by the Government, and to be pushed off quickly to the Punjab. They rioted. Sum total of the fighting, eighteen killed and twenty-nine, including Gurdit Singh, disappeared. Thirty-one were gaoled. The remainder, enemies for life of the British, were sent to the Punjab, where they could spread their doctrine.

Touch one Sikh, and all the community goes on the war path. A good foundation was laid for future trouble.

As the war neared its end, India became more and more disturbed, to such a point that, finally, it became urgently necessary for the British to do something definite. They did two things. The Secretary of State for India came in person to study the question, and a commission was formed, headed by one Mr. Justice Rowlatt, to take up the question of the terrorist movement in particular.

One of the greatest difficulties the British police have to cope with in tracking down and bringing to trial a political assassin, is that nobody wants to give evidence. In 1928, for instance, a young police officer called Saunders was shot and killed at midday in the middle of Lahore, and yet not a soul could be found who had witnessed the murder.

Possible witnesses know all too well that the societies stick at nothing to avenge themselves, and that, in nine cases out of ten, the witness's life isn't worth insuring from the moment his identity is known. Some of them have actually been shot down coming out of court. Few of them have been able to remain in the same locality. The police, then, have to rely greatly upon the paid informer, who readily becomes an agent provocateur, and is, in no case, a very satisfactory stand by.

The Commission's efforts brought forth a document known as the Rowlatt Bill, which provided for secret trials, powers of search, restriction of the movements of persons known to be connected with conspiracies at any time, etc. Few things could have been calculated to arouse greater indignation throughout India. It meant putting unthinkable power into the hands of the police, and India has no tradition of faith in the incorruptibility of this service, as far as its subordinate officials are concerned.

Moreover, the Act was taken as a direct affront—a slur upon the honour of that India which had, after all, shown fine loyalty during the war. Together with this came the fearful Amritsar business, and, as if that were not enough, the Muslims of India were distressed and indignant over the treatment meted out to Turkey by the Allies.

These three things led to Gandhi's sudden step forward, tak-

ing a policy independently of the Congress Party of which he had been for years a member. So the first noncoöperation campaign began.

As far as its direct object, Swaraj in one year, was concerned, it failed. But Montague's Reform schemes also were handicapped from the start by the feverish atmosphere in which they were launched.

Meanwhile, Moscow became the directive centre of international revolution, and the former Berliners shifted there.

In discussing Moscow's activities and influence in the East a little clarification is needed. British officials point out, with perfect accuracy, that Communism as a doctrine is not likely to prove appealing to the Indian masses. And, since this is so, conclude that Communist activities in India may be discounted for all practical purposes. At least, they concluded this for almost ten years, at the end of which period, 1929, the Government of India found it necessary to introduce a Public Safety Bill directed precisely against foreign Communist agents in India.

The reason for so curious a misunderstanding is that it is not fully realized by Westerners that Russia, in the East, does not stress Communist doctrines, as in the West. She stresses Asiatic freedom from Western oppression, hence the League against Imperialism whose everyday headquarters are still in Berlin, but whose leading spirits are of the Third Internationale. And, moreover, Russia is willing, as she has shown in China, to assist as actively as possible with officers, arms, and money all movements against the West.

Nevertheless, in spite of very careful organization, extending to the Indian groups in America, Constantinople, England, Afghanistan, China, etc., it was in the end decided that the terrorist movement, as such, had shot its bolt. Rigid arms regulations made violence of that kind more and more difficult. The revolutionaries, too, had their own troubles. While miserable youths, drugged with *bhang,* a preparation of hemp, threw their rather pitiful home-made bombs and got gaoled, their instigators, abroad, made a good living out of "The Cause."

Probably not half the money collected ever reached its destination in India. Many of the "workers" in America, for instance, were nothing more than confidence men, starting Leagues for this or that sort of freedom in India, and collecting money not only in America, but from India itself. On the other hand, many so-called religious teachers "swamis," "faqirs," and what-nots, thrilling the always easily excited idle, rich women of this country, have been in reality terrorist agents collecting funds.

A new leader was to dawn upon the Indian horizon. His name was Jawahirlal Nehru, and he came of a wealthy and highly reputed family in the United Provinces. He, too, had a Cambridge education, and in time visited Russia where he learnt much. His father, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, was an extremely successful lawyer who was so affected by his son's views, that in the end he gave up a very large practice in order to devote himself to the Nationalist cause.

Moti Lal Nehru is by no means ostensibly as much of an extremist as his son. But it was Jawahirlal who, at Nagpur in 1928, sounded the call for new action. His speech, along the soundest revolutionary lines, was to the effect that India must take heart from Russia's example. In that vast, inert mass, a few energetic men and women had worked miracles. India must realize that expulsion of the British was not, in itself a sufficient programme with which to arouse the masses. An economic programme must be devised, and then, with a few hundred, clear-thinking people, wonders in India could also be worked.

During the following August, Vallabhai Patel, Gandhi's lieutenant, tried out an economic idea at Bardoli where the peasants, discontented with the land revenue situation, were easily persuaded to undertake passive resistance and refuse to pay taxes. Eventually the peasants won. The point was more or less proved. They could be roused.

In Bombay, itself, an attack upon capitalism was directed by the Girni Kamgar, a Red trade union. Protracted struggles between owners and men have contributed to Bombay's ruin.

It was not surprising, then, to see Gandhi reënter political

life at the annual Congress in Calcutta, 1929. Resisting some of Jawahirlal Nehru's extremist motions, he threw down the gauntlet once more, demanding Dominion Status by 1930, or. . . .

Obviously his demand was not meant to succeed. The British could, it is true, make definite plans and offer definite guarantees, and it is also true that they did nothing. Until the beginning of January, 1930, when Lord Irwin with genuine statesmanship and understanding of the feeling of India announced Dominion Status as the definite goal for India, plus the immediately practical step of a Round Table Conference for the purpose of discussing the Simon Report and plans for the future.

Then the British had a shock. Gandhi, whom they had always considered to be an amiable if somewhat half-witted idealist, manœuvred his own nomination for the Presidency of the Congress in such a manner as to make his own withdrawal, at the right moment, an assurance of Jawahirlal's election.

Moreover, he declared that he and Jawahirlal were, so to speak, as one. Incidentally, he formulated certain unlikely conditions for participation in the Round Table Conference, and, these being rejected, rejected the Conference in his turn.

Meeting at Lahore, the Congress, under Jawahirlal's leadership finally swung to the extreme Left, and decided upon an immediate campaign for complete independence. That the Moderates withdrew and the Muslims boycotted the whole affair, was really of no consequence. Jawahirlal Nehru had, at last, not only all the determined subversive elements, but Gandhi himself, the most picturesque figure in India. What could be sweeter?

There the movie, for a few moments, ends, with a shot of Mrs. Besant, saying to the British: "I told you so!" Who would have thought that the arrival of those two, odd people, Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, would have culminated in all this? Who could have imagined, seeing that timid little group of 1883, bashfully requesting a few more jobs for Indians and a humble little share in India's government, that it would in the end become a powerful group demanding complete independence, and, gathering the most violent elements into its fold, would lead

them to—passive resistance against British rifles and machine guns!

One gazes at these events with a sort of despair, and again the question recurs: Why is it necessary to throw bombs in order to be convincing?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE SAINTS' CONFLICT

WE sat side by side on a curb fender in a room that, though it was the drawing room of a Raja's palace, reminded me strongly of a seaside villa in England. Something, perhaps, in the sort of red chosen for the walls, the far too many, silver-framed photographs, the grand piano, the terrible mantelpiece, all brackets, the heavy furniture—all combining to make a ludicrous note in the heart of an Himalayan valley. I was not surprised to hear that the wife of an ex-British official had been responsible for this curious effort.

He—the other person on the curb fender—was a tall, thin man in riding breeches, whose aquiline Norman profile was a trifle contradicted by his blue eyes, a little those eyes of the mystic which have a way of looking through things. One felt in him, too, the terrible sincerity of the mystic—the man who is so dangerous because he lives and acts by his principles.

There were other people in the room. On the far corner of the Chesterfield, his wife, a delicately-featured woman with keen eyes and a charming smile, a person of strong likes and dislikes, and yet, one felt, profoundly akin to him. Probably the only person there who really understood him.

The Raja himself, an undersized youth who showed promise of weight in his later years sat opposite. There was something pathetically monkey-like in his ugly, little face and nervous stammer. Near him, his minister, an enigmatic, oily personage. And, scattered about, an Englishman, tall, handsome in a Ouidæsque style, and a silent, clever Scot with lines of work about his eyes and mouth.

My thoughts came back to the man next to me. He had lost

a hand—or was it an arm?—in the war, and over the artificial affair by which it had been replaced, wore a dark brown leather glove. And now he was talking.

He was asking questions, very simply, and really because he wanted to know. "Did the Indians really want self-government —or was it only the clamour of a few politicians?" He asked questions, and, strange phenomenon, he listened to their answers.

I knew too little about India to give him a sensible answer. And in any case, for once, I really wanted to hear some one else talk—especially this man. What he thought about India was so much more important, for he was His Excellency, Lord Irwin, Viceroy and Governor General of India.

In my mind I contrasted him with another man in India—Mahatma Gandhi. What one felt so particularly about Lord Irwin was his reality. It is such a rare quality. Most people are made up of externals, second hand ideas, unquestioningly accepted; ideas distorted by personal emotion; they see of life only what they are told to see, and even then, only what they wish to see.

One looks at them and sees figures half hidden by changing mists of desires, appetites, prejudices, indeterminately edged, with here and there dark patches. Looking at Lord Irwin, one saw something clean-edged, almost lucent. One knew that he would always mean what he said, or say nothing. And so one trusted him instantly.

A man who acted on principle. What principles, I wondered. I knew he loved simplicity, unlike certain predecessors who managed to be magnificent without being impressive. But if one has natural dignity there is no need for pomp, even in India.

Anxious police officers wailed about his dislike of secret service guards, so that, "We have to stick 'em behind bushes and things, anywhere where he won't see them." Other people said, in slightly awed tones, that he went to church at least three times on Sundays. Once, they might have stood, but three times . . . Indians noted approvingly that he was sparing in his food and drink. I had seen him prefer cider cup to champagne at lunch—and that sort of thing is always remarked by Indians.

Everybody knew that Lord Irwin liked to see things for himself, going, for instance, out to the villages informally and trying to ascertain something of the peasants' life and conditions. Both he and Lady Irwin had, it was said, a genuine interest in the social conditions of India.

It seemed to be true. There was Gurgaon, for instance. At Gurgaon, a few miles from Delhi, a perfectly crazy Commissioner insisted upon putting through schemes of social uplift. He seemed to think that clean villages, education for the young men and young women in the matter of running their homes and farms, and similar things, were more important even than roads. With what the Punjab Government could only consider reprehensible high-handedness he not only refused to be transferred, but used up most of the money he ought to have spent on roads and so forth on these absurd schemes of his. After all, what really efficient Commissioner would bother about evolving cheaper and better ploughs, more effective Persian water wheels, and things like that?

It was rather distressing, therefore, to find the Viceroy taking an interest—going out to the annual agricultural fair (another innovation), or arriving suddenly to look over what was being done. But the people liked it, just as the women of India were touched when Lady Irwin turned up suddenly and quite informally in the middle of the All India Women's Conference for Educational Reform, just to sit and listen to the proceedings.

Everything, in India, depends upon personality. No amount of pomp and show impresses the Indian if the central personality isn't convincing. This is a point all too often forgotten by the British in India. Indians know what you are thinking rather sooner than you do yourself; they know what you are rather better than you might perhaps always care to realize. They are quick to seize and to appreciate the fine points of every situation.

They liked and trusted Lord Irwin. "If he doesn't get spoilt", they said. "So many men come out here and begin so well, and then the atmosphere gets them, and they are just like all the rest."

One foresaw easily enough that Lord Irwin's real difficulties

would be with the extremists of his own side, rather than with those of the opposition. One wondered, for instance, how he would get on with the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, a man Indians neither respected nor liked. Among Indians it was felt that both could hardly survive. Fortunately for England, as well as for India, Lord Birkenhead decided to leave the India Office. Whatever his merits, his personality could not be helpful at this moment.

Remained the Die Hards who are so prominent in the Conservative Party. Unquestionably, Lord Irwin's master stroke of policy in India was the declaration of January, 1930, when, realizing the seething discontent and suspicion obtaining in India, and accurately weighing the forces gathering behind Gandhi and his "Dominion Status by 1930" slogan, Lord Irwin, returning from a short trip to England, announced the calling of a Round Table Conference to include all Indian leaders, and again stressed the fact that India's goal is Dominion Status, to which Britain is pledged.

This took all the wind out of the extremists' sails. For a short time it seemed as though it might render the extremists' plans abortive. But the British Die Hards saved them. Promptly there ensued a most bitter Parliamentary attack upon the Viceroy, and India, shrugging its shoulders, said, "Do you really think these people will ever give us one inch of freedom if we don't force them into it? The Viceroy means it; *he's* honest—if all the British were like him it might be different. But they aren't. Look at them!"

That, of course, is one of the difficulties of a Viceroy's time in India. He stands more or less as a buffer between many conflicting interests. Usually, if he is popular with the Indians he is not so popular with the British who suspect him of "weakness," "pro Indianism", and what not. In any case, it is immensely difficult for him to get at facts as they are, since he must largely rely upon his officials for data. And where they are likely to go wrong is in gauging just those psychological factors which are supremely important in India.

Yet, for India to be convinced of a man's good will and sin-

cerity is a tremendous advantage; for India to feel that he is guided by spiritual principles is even more. "If these Christians," the East has so often sighed, "Would only follow Christ's teachings a little more closely. . . ."

I remembered him, this ascetic figure of a Viceroy, when I found myself one evening in the Maharaja of Porbandar's beautiful little club, talking to a professional ascetic, Mr. Gandhi.

Though it was January, the climate down on that Arabian Sea coast was perfect—neither too hot, nor too cold. Gandhi, like myself, was a guest of the Maharaja in whose State he had been born and in whose State his father and grandfather had served. I had been playing bad Bridge—I made it bad—with His Highness and one or two officials, but as Gandhi came over from the State Guest House whose grounds prolong those of the club, we all shifted our chairs on to the lawn, and sat there beneath the cocoanut palms listening to the band.

For nearly two weeks I had prolonged my stay just to meet Gandhi—and he disappointed me. Perhaps if I had just come from the West—perhaps if I had never met any really holy men —he might have impressed me. But there wasn't in him, a shadow of that electrical radiation which makes you know, so surely, that here is a great soul. Neither then, nor afterwards.

One expected him to be ugly, small, weak-voiced. The bit about his clothes, or lack of them, had never impressed me very much, because there is no particular hardship about wearing a *dhoti* in India. What perhaps troubled my equanimity was the manner—that compound of the politician and the professional religionist—so like that of the very dark Indian whom you find in the West being condescendingly esoteric among a bevy of dewy-eyed females.

Was it absolutely necessary, one wondered, gazing at the large jug-handle ears, the long, cunning nose, the wide mouth, and the small eyes? All around sat his adoring followers. Personally, it didn't matter in the least to me who they were. But Gandhi explained—there was Mirabai—Miss Slade—daughter of a British admiral, whom he had put through a year's probation

before she joined him. And there was Miss Somebody else, of one of the richest families in Bombay. And, over there, a chief of somewhere and his wife, who had given up a *gadi* (throne) to follow him. I wondered again. Did Gandhi really think such things would impress me? And if he didn't, why tell me?

Miss Slade explained to me that Gandhi was the second Christ, and that one day all the world would make pilgrimage to his birthplace. I liked her. Sincere people always appeal to one, even if they are a trifle feverish about things. Like those other dewy-eyed females I remembered in New York.

I never saw Gandhi off duty, so to speak, though I wanted to very much. In fact, I sent a request through the Maharaja's Prime Minister for a private interview and heard in reply that I could come and see him in the morning. Seeing people quite alone makes it impossible for you to quote them afterwards so you can talk freely, and, usually, you can get a clear impression of the personality you are studying. What people say to strangers matters so very little as a rule. What they are and what they do, gives you your information.

But when I went upstairs to Gandhi's apartments in the guest house, I found him elaborately posed on a matress with one of his adorers anxiously taking down the pearls falling from his lips. The rest were all grouped around, and the general atmosphere was not intensely sympathetic. Somewhere in a corner was an arrangement of metal and wires which I afterwards discovered to be a *charka*—Gandhi's version. The real Indian spinning wheel is made of wood.

One had again that deadening sense of the would-be great. You know how rather third-rate authors and movie stars behave at Women's Club luncheons in Mid Western cities. They are bored and you are bored and yet they love it. They're so frightfully busy being celebrities, that they quite forget to be people—but almost everybody thinks they are just too perfectly wonderful. And everybody goes away exhilarated because they have met Mr. Jinglesmith who wrote—you know. One might as well be exhilarated over having met the elephant in the circus.

Gandhi was just like that. I sat on a chair, an unfair ad-

vantage, and anyhow I prefer the floor. But he wasn't the kind of man one wanted to throw chairs aside for—it was not that kind of an atmosphere. And he was being frightfully cautious because he didn't trust me, while, at the same time, his entourage wanted to see him dispose of the American. Perhaps I was also suffering vicariously for another American with whom he had recently had a passage at arms.

So there we sat and fenced with each other. The only difference was that I was absolutely sincere and anxious to know his point of view, and he wasn't sincere. People who love to dissect themselves in public as Gandhi was just then doing in the newspapers (*"My Experiments with Truth"*) are often more actuated by exhibitionism than sincerity.

But he was quite subtle. Had one not known something of his actions, one might have thought him rather imbecile at moments, but in India imbecility is one way of getting out of an answer, I would gaze at him earnestly and enquire what he thought India's contribution to the world might be, and he would gaze vacantly at nothing and say, "How can a prisoner say what he will contribute to society until he is free?" Which is nothing but blah. Then the scribe would write busily, and there would be a pause.

Now and then, I noticed, he stopped and lost track of himself in the middle of a sentence. Then he would come to and somebody would remind him, so that he could finish it, I suddenly, for some reason, thought of President Wilson in Paris. Finally, in desperation, I touched upon the woman question.

That, it seemed, got him. He told me, with a note of unction in his voice, something about his "Hindu brethren" not always treating women properly, but that in spite of this, women in India had more power than anywhere else in the world. To this I demurred, bringing in the American woman. Whereupon, Gandhi informed me that the power of the American woman was based upon something "equally discreditable to her and to the men."

When I recovered from the shock, I wanted an amplification, but he explained that, direct as he usually was—though so far

I hadn't noticed this about him—he could not be more direct in mixed company. Whereupon, I'm afraid I sat and lectured Gandhi about the American woman, and after that I got up and went away.

It was, after all, so very like him. One quite understood, after that, Gandhi "loosing forces he couldn't control"—as he says of his first noncoöperation campaign, being deeply regretful and then doing it all over again. One understood, seeing his carefully prepared meeting, with the hall all roped off in sections and the speeches all printed to say nothing of a hallelujah choir singing his praises from a stand in the middle of the meeting, how much he owed to marvellous organization.

What did he get out of it all, I wondered? And, studying him from all these different angles, it seemed to me that what he got was power. Asceticism? A man with a weak stomach, such as he told me he has, has to be rather careful about his diet anyway. Fasting? That is India's traditional method of getting its point. You just sit down and refuse to eat until things straighten out. Muslims fast for an exhausting month, without food or water or cigarettes or *pan,* from sunrise to sunset, and Hindus also have many fasts. For the rest, Indian life is not complicated by all kinds of furniture and possessions to the same extent as that of the West. One can be perfectly comfortable in a bare room with a single garment.

All that sort of thing means nothing, except perhaps to oneself. There is only one way of judging spiritual greatness—by the purifying effect it has on you when you meet with it. A certain clarity, a certain simplicity of the heart, and, definitely, that ex-centricity which considers oneself or even one's faults not worth discussion.

Gandhi isn't like that. There's too much "I" in his general make up. In reality, he is never impersonal. In everything he says and does, one is tremendously aware of the fact that he himself is aware of Gandhi doing this or saying that. And so the man's personality, his external personality, gets over exactly according to the best tenets of American salesmanship.

Yet, if you cut out all the "spiritual" nonsense, and think of

him calmly as a politician and a lawyer, he has the greatness of success. Not Indian, of course. Gandhi's long association with the West sticks out all over him. He's a Tolstoyan, a Russian Christian, with all the Russian's tendency to dwell upon himself. He even confesses his weakness exactly like Tolstoy, to the point where a healthy person wants to shake him and tell him to get up and be a little less morbid. But though many individuals have cause to regret their belief in his promises regarding Swaraj in one year and so forth, no one can deny that he has done something for India.

No one can deny that he is clever. Strip all the fine words from *satyagraha,* passive resistance, and there is sound tactics at the bottom. What can an unarmed people do except let themselves be beaten or slaughtered until the general imagination can bear it no longer, and everybody becomes infuriated? That was the inner meaning of the "abortive" rising in the Ireland of 1916. It has been the meaning of all martyrdom throughout history.

Looking over Gandhi's life, one cannot but be struck by the fact that he is always fighting authority. His constructive ideas are so weak as to be almost negligible. He is not, like the late Gokhale, in any sense a statesman. Thus he has given the world a false impression of impracticality.

But when it comes to a destructive plan, then there is nothing impractical in Gandhi. He knows exactly the sensitive spot to touch, the appeal to make, the effect to create, and what will ensue. But, having destroyed, he has no real idea of rebuilding. So you find him advocating boycott of British goods—a perfectly good, negative idea. By way of construction, let us all spin and let us all wear *khaddar.* Whereupon the price of yarn goes up, and the peasant finds homespun becoming too dear for him. The yarn, of course, comes from England.

So, too, he says, "Let us rebel against the salt tax." "Let us abolish the liquor shops." But, having taken these perfectly real grievances—then what? The real issue is not the salt tax, but the salt monopoly—which calls for constructive thinking, of which Gandhi is not capable. One cannot imagine anything more terrible, as far as Gandhi is concerned, than for him suddenly to

find himself at the head of India's government. Then, in all probability, he really would retire to a spiritual life.

The secret of all his career and of his appeal, seems to be in his inferiority complex. His father and grandfather were Diwans of an Indian State, but in that State one hears nothing very good about them. Gandhi, himself, is, of course, physically inferior, and he has, in common with so many reformers who reform because they fear themselves, a curiously un-Indian conviction of inherent sinfulness. He is always revolting against his own body, against himself, like a mediæval Christian or a Puritan. And his idea of self-discipline is, as much as possible, destructive of the body.

Externally, this fundamental disharmony of Gandhi's finds its expression in revolt against the Government. Had Gandhi been a native of any other country, he would still be anti something. His luck is that he has something genuine to oppose. The West understands him, in the sense of recognition, because he answers exactly to Western conceptions of sainthood plus the glamour of being an Indian. The sort of people he repels, in the West, are precisely the sort who feel a little sickened by the extravagances and morbidity you find in the Lives of the Saints.

But many people in India, especially in the educated classes and among the young students, are suffering from a general inferiority complex, bred in them, forced upon them by the exigencies of foreign rule. For such people, Gandhi personifies escape from their secret humiliation, a wish-fulfilment, a road towards increased self-respect. And that is really what is called his "spiritual power"—a simple but a very real thing. It is, in fact, the story of St. Paul—the man who made the Christ he never knew and understood less, the figure of a slave's dream.

Not in his personality, not in his ideas, not even in his sincerity—which is largely discounted in India—lies his appeal, but in his defiance of the overruling power.

What a strange juxtaposition—the Christian English gentleman, fine, sensitive, honest, and really constructive, in every way the more admirable character of the two, doing his best under fearful handicaps and without a great deal of sympathy from

anyone. And, facing him, the ugly, little Tolstoyan poseur, self-conscious, shifty, destructive, unpleasantly unctuous, yet imposing himself as a sort of saint upon thousands of people in the West who don't know him, because he personifies the elements that made Christianity—at the expense of Christ.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE UNKNOWN THIRD

ONE wouldn't think it possible, but it is a fact that, when Mr. Lionel Curtis, Mr. Montague, and Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy got together, actually or metaphorically, and evolved the scheme for the self-government of India which came to light as "the Montford Reforms" they completely forgot the Indian States.

What they overlooked, actually, was a small item of some five or six hundred ruling princes, governing over seventy-two million people, covering at least a third of the territory of India, and all bound to the Crown by solemn treaties, *sanads* (letters of agreement), and other forms of engagement to mutual protection and alliance.

The mistake was repeated all over again when the Simon Commission went to India to study the question once more, and, when it had spent two cold weathers touring British India, learnt the Constitution by heart, and began to write its Report, it suddenly discovered that one couldn't settle the future of India without taking the States into consideration.

That such a thing could happen is entirely consistent with the general fog that obscures the relations of the Indian States with their suzerain power, Great Britain. Theoretically, the Indian States have nothing to do with British India, though in actual practice the Government of India has come really to be the Government of British India, and the Political Department, through whom all external and British relations with the States are conducted, is a part of the Government of British India. What the Political Department does, or why it does anything, is largely "wropt in mystery." Officials of other Departments are

busy men, clamped to their jobs, knowing little and caring even less about anything outside of their immediate orbit.

Therefore, in British India, the greatest ignorance exists as to what the ruling Princes are like, how they run their States, what their subjects feel, or what they themselves, as an Order, want. Until the Government passed an act protecting them, vernacular papers made a good thing out of blackmailing various Princes who might have some personal failing to conceal, and some of that mud still sticks.

From people in British India, then, you gain a vague impression that the States are something in the nature of museum curiosities, backward, inefficient, shiftless, whose lazy, self-indulgent rulers are devoted to the British because they know that were it not for British bayonets they would vanish like mists at noonday. You gather that each State is a hotbed of intrigue and vice, and that only the presence of the British prevents the ruler from oppressing his subjects out of existence.

The latter, you understand, sigh for British rule and flee into British territory as much as possible. You hear that the Princes are opposed to self government for India and hate and fear the Swarajists because these are determined to oust them immediately. Somewhat contradictorily, you also learn that were it not for the presence of the British, the Indian Princes would instantly organize a grand, looting campaign into British India, especially Bengal, devastate the countryside, and then fall to fighting among themselves.

Some of this may be quite true. But in view of it all, one wonders why so well-informed a man as Sir Walter Lawrence should seriously have suggested as a solution of India's difficulties, a gradual transformation of all British India into Indian States. And, studying the question of misrule, you are also surprised to learn that the late Sir John Strachey, collecting all the cases of misgovernment in Indian States so serious as to necessitate British intervention, could only muster ten over a period of forty years: that is, less than two per cent in four decades—a rather lower percentage of bad government than that of the ruling families of Europe.

How different the atmosphere of an Indian State is from that of British India. You feel it as soon as you cross the border. You see it in the dress of the people, which is more colourful than that of British India. The Gandhi cap and the little black pill box hat of the city Hindu almost disappear, to be replaced by brightly coloured *paggaris*. The people seem straighter, they look at you more directly and salute you with ready friendliness. In the bazaars, things are usually cheaper, and it is nowadays only in an Indian State that you can still find beautiful native handicrafts making an effort to survive.

Since it has become something of a hobby among Indian princes to rebuild their capitals after their heart's desire, you very often find in Indian States much cleaner, better run towns than in British India. Compare Hyderabad (Deccan), Mysore, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Kapurthala, Patiala—cities varying from the fourth largest in India down to small towns—with Lahore City, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, and a good deal of Calcutta, and the former win every time. The European section of British Indian cities is always excellent, the rest doesn't compare.

As regards the villages in Indian States, and the amount of emigration from them, one soon realises that this depends upon the quality of the land, the economic opportunities within the State, and finally upon its government. Where there is good land and a fair chance for a living, people will come into the State from British India. When the reverse is the case, they will leave the State to get a living elsewhere.

One very often heard in British India that the States must disappear in the course of evolution, that they were, in any case, only an antiquated survival. But after spending a good deal of time in various States, I began to doubt this theory very gravely. It must be remembered that the Indian States vary considerably, both in size and type of rule. Some, like Hyderabad, cover thousands of square miles and include a population larger than that of Ireland or Belgium. Others are tiny little affairs, not larger than a good sized estate, with perhaps eight or ten villages. Some have practically unrestricted rights to make their own laws and complete power of life or death over their subjects; some have

limited powers; others have little or none. The smaller may disappear, the larger show no signs of decrepitude.

The outstanding characteristic of their rule is its intensely personal quality. Fundamentally, it is more democratic than that of British India, because, while the Prince is thoretically an autocrat, actually there is not the gulf between Court and subjects that exists in British India between British and Indians. When it comes to questions of social reform, for instance, a great deal more can be done in an Indian State, by reason of the ruler's personal influence than in British India.

An Indian Prince can abolish child-marriage; as many of the larger Indian States did, while the British were still hesitating for political reasons. He can, as many rulers have done, institute systems of free primary education for boys and girls, and so you find even a small State like Porbandar, covering six hundred and forty-two square miles and including one hundred and six villages, owning to no less than seventy-three primary schools plus fourteen private schools, and carrying on an extensive propaganda against illiteracy.

In Baroda, you notice that primary education is not only free but compulsory. In Limbdi, a very small State, the ruler provides free primary education on condition that the village elders ensure a certain percentage of school attendance. A growing number of States provide scholarships for their subjects, both girls and boys, to study abroad or in other parts of India, and especially for the study of vernacular classics and Indian arts.

States like Baroda and Nawanagar support conservatories of Indian music; others, like Bikaner and Bahawalpur, are noted for their irrigation works and canal colonies; some, like Patiala and Hyderabad, afford training in indigenous medicine; many, such as Hyderabad, Mysore, Nawanagar, etc., etc., not only subsidise cottage industries and native arts and handicrafts, but provide training in such subjects.

Travancore, the great feminist State of India, has a constitutional government well in advance of anything in British India. Not only do Travancore women vote and manage their own affairs, but the Civil Service is thrown open to them.

"Ah, but," says the average hearer, "what about British justice? That, at least, cannot be bettered in the Indian States."

Unhappily, one comes even to doubt that. In an Indian State, justice is often personally dispensed. Certainly all serious cases in States with ample powers come before the ruler. They are decided according to State laws, but a good deal of equity softens the legal outline. In the case of a good ruler, decisions are swift and to the point. True, intrigue or other factors may, where the ruler is not so good, lead to injustice, but the victim then laments his hard fate and hopes for better luck next time.

British judicial processes work excellently—in England where the judiciary functions in its natural setting. In India, however, your case depends tremendously upon the lawyer you can afford to hire, his standing with the judge, the number of witnesses you can afford to suborn, the appeals, counter appeals, stays, adjournments, and what not you and your opponents can stage. The whole thing comes down to a process of attrition, financial, mental, and physical. Consequently, while big murders decrease, petty crime increases, without a corresponding increase in the number of convictions obtained. A most illuminating illustration is found on the North West Frontier, where the official report for 1926 shows that the percentage of convictions in true cases before the British courts in that year was only thirty-three, though this was the best record over a period of ten years. In the same year, the percentage of convictions in cases referred to *tribal* jirgas was fifty-eight and one-tenth.

In Hyderabad State, out of a total of 4,747 cases tried in the Criminal Courts during the decade ending 1922, no less than 3,217 resulted in convictions. It was in 1922 that Hyderabad State instituted a reform for which British India has long clamoured, namely the separation of the judicial from the executive departments, an experiment which has been justified by success both as regards economy and efficiency and the restoration of public confidence.

When civil suits are in question, in British India, criticisms of the system apply even more poignantly. Justice becomes very much a matter of luck. No one questions the integrity of the

British officials concerned. What ought to be clearly understood is that the great days of British justice were those in which the official administered justice very much as the Prince does now.

On the whole, one finds, comparing British India and Indian India, that a well run State, especially a State large enough to stand the expense of modern administrative methods, is, in many respects, far ahead of British India when it comes to real government and general progress among the people.

Yet even a big State has grave political and economic handicaps. One cannot criticise the States, or even estimate their position or their future, without very careful study of these difficulties, beginning with their geographical location and continuing, through their political past and present relations with the British, to their economic problems.

The British, it will be remembered, acquired India in mouthfuls, sometimes by direct conquest, more often by successful intrigue for which they required the help of various Princes. In order to gain such help, they sometimes made treaties of alliance. Other treaties were made, as a matter of expediency, when it would have been inconvenient to antagonise a prince, or a set of princes, with a notable reputation for fighting or a very great prestige. Yet others were made either because the Board of Directors thought annexation had gone far enough and was costing too much money, or because the State lands were not worth taking.

Obviously, wherever possible, strategy dictated the possession of the sea coasts, so that today nearly all the States are situated inland, cut off by British territory from any direct outlet. Very often they are, so to speak, mixed up with British territory, so that you find a group of State villages wildly jumbled with groups of British Indian villages and so on.

Treaties with these Indian States were made at different epochs. One can almost tell what the situation was at the moment by the nature of the treaty. Where a State was strong, or a strong State was convenient, one finds a treaty of alliance whereby the State owns the suzerainty of the British as a pre-

liminary to mutual guarantees of assistance for general defensive necessities, and a confirmation as well as solemn assurance of the State's internal sovereignty Where the State was unfriendly or too strong, it often went out of existence. Where it was very small, it received guarantees assuring it of definitely limited internal powers.

To each of these Indian Courts, the East India Company appointed its representatives and, following the policy of the times, with certain notable exceptions, such as Mountstuart Elphinstone, Colonel Tod, Metcalfe, Sir Thomas Munro, etc., these representatives had one dominant thought—to secure, as far as possible, control of the State, without too much regard for the means whereby this might be achieved. Neither then, nor at any subsequent period, has the British attitude towards the Indian Princes been characterized by any great trust or confidence in the States. The main idea has always been to watch them closely and prevent them from getting together.

Nor was there any nonsense about ruling India for its own good, especially where the States were concerned. India was first ruled for the good of the East India Company, and the States treaties were supervised and interpreted for the good of British India.

Following the Mutiny, all treaties were solemnly reaffirmed by Royal Proclamation, and a machinery known as the Foreign and Political Department set up for the purpose of supervising the treaties between the States and the British. The intention was good, but the inheritance, like that of the rest of India, was bad.

What had been a dominant thought in John Company days, became an obsession with the Political Department. It could become an obsession, because the Department was absolutely unchecked in its actions. No Prince was allowed to have diplomatic relations with his fellows, except through the Department, so that each wretched State in a difficulty dealt alone with the mighty British. To this day, the Department has very little hesitation in restricting the movements of a Prince where it thinks fit, so that he can be largely isolated.

The Indian States being theoretically in charge of their own internal affairs, Parliament was more or less prevented from discussing them very much. Should some flagrant instance occur either of misrule in the State or mistake on the part of the Department, the latter usually managed, for the public good, to withhold essential information. And so it lived for sixty years, completely exempt from criticism, until it has become the most powerful bureaucracy the world has ever seen.

Studying the Political Department at work, one doesn't know whether to laugh or to be horrified. One pictures a lot of very respectable gentlemen, all in the best Public School tradition, all highly patriotic and personally honest, hypnotizing themselves with some of the most extraordinary theories of political relationships imaginable and carrying out almost iniquitous deeds from the point of view of ethics, without one small shudder. In fact, the few individuals who, conscience stricken, champion States' rights, are usually extremely unpopular, and disposed of in one word: "Crank."

For, from time to time, a literal interpretation of this or that treaty would prove inconvenient to the British. It might be considered necessary or expedient to ignore or infringe upon these solemn engagements, either with a view to possessing some land, grabbing some privilege, or just generally keeping the Princes in order.

By way of justifying such irregularities, an amusing theory was built up, based on the idea that treaties with an Indian State have not the same sanctity as treaties with other powers because the power making these treaties with the States is their suzerain. In other words, solemn covenants or no solemn covenants, the Government of India might govern the States as it pleased.

This theory was quite brutally put in Sir Charles Lewis Tupper's book, *Our Indian Protectorate,* published about 1893. And, of course, it was too crude and perhaps too candid to pass uncorrected. Moreover, it did not quite truly represent the views and practice of the Political Department. These were much more subtle, and might be summed up as: If you can get

away with murder once, your success constitutes a perfectly good legal precedent for doing it next time.

The other name for this theory is "Indian political law," and more politely expressed, it means that Departmental interpretation of a treaty has the effect of law. Should the Department, for instance, infringe upon a Treaty right, its infringement constitutes a precedent for future conduct. In support of this idea, the practice of British Courts in interpreting Acts of Parliament is cited. And the analogy would be a perfectly good one provided, as A. P. Nicholson points out, that these Courts of Law sat in secret, took no evidence, refused counsel to the defendants, and permitted no appeal.

Anyhow, Sir Charles Tupper, before he published his hair-raising work, compiled a book of leading cases illustrating British political conduct towards the States. This became the secret manual of "practice" upon which the Political Department bases its policy, and which no one outside the Department, except possibly the Viceroy or the Secretary of State, is allowed to see.

Another strange theory of international relations was propounded by Sir William Lee Warner, in his book, *The Protected Princes of India,* which is considered a standard authority. Hastening to correct Sir Charles Tupper's unfortunate ideas, Sir William, nevertheless, adhered absolutely to the Departmental theory that "the treaties are subject to the fretting action of consuetudinary law." The judgments of the British Government in regard to issues raised with the States become established usage and the source of rights, even if there is no tacit agreement.

Going yet a little further, Sir William adds that, the States being all members of one family, as necessity arises any treaty obligation imposed upon one may be applied to all. By a study of all the treaties together, the Government may arrive at the customary treatment accorded to leading sovereigns. This is called "extensive interpretation." One can only imagine what would happen if the landlord of a big apartment house having, at various times, made various agreements with various tenants, took it into his head that any clause of any one agreement might

be applied to all or any of the tenants, regardless of their particular documents.

Between 1916 and 1921, India was in a most disturbed condition, and, constitutional reforms being in the air, the Princes put in a request that some fairer machinery for dealing with them be evolved. They asked definitely that an advisory Council of Princes be formed, which might be consulted in addition to the Political Secretary by the Viceroy. Furthermore, in important disputes between the Government of India and the States, the Princes requested that some means be found of referring the matter to a court of arbitration.

In 1921, therefore, the Chamber of Princes was organized. Ingeniously enough, however, its business and procedure was placed under the control of the Political Department. Its powers of debate are extremely limited, and arbitration may only be referred to at the instance of the Government, which reserves the right to refuse its decisions. Its Standing Committee is supposed to take the place of the advisory council of Princes, and does at times consult with the Political Department, but so far without much in the way of results.

What seems to happen is that the Princes and the Government formulate a tentative agreement. Then the Government refers this to a local Political Officer or a provincial Government which sadly announces that this simply cannot be. Then everybody begins arguing all over again, and the Princes point out that they have gone as far as they dare in the direction of compromise and that is, so to speak, the end of that.

Nevertheless, the Chamber of Princes has, with all its handicaps, brought about certain definite results. For one thing, getting together, the Princes exchanged experiences and discovered how widespread encroachments on their treaties have been. Whereupon they formulated their grievances and asked the Viceroy for an impartial tribunal before which they might bring evidence of broken treaties.

This led to the creation of the Indian States Committee headed by Sir Spencer Harcourt Butler, an ex-Political Secretary to the Government of India. True to its traditions, the

Committee toured the States, and heard evidence there and in London with a minimum of publicity. It gave the States, on the whole, but little satisfaction, though it admitted their contention to the effect that their treaties were with the Crown and not with the Government of India.

The more you go into the situation, the more like *Alice in Wonderland* it becomes. The Harcourt Butler Committee earnestly disavowed the "extensive interpretation" theory but retained the "custom and usage" conception. Admitting that the relations of the Indian States are, legally speaking, with the Crown, it nevertheless recommends that the Political Department continue to supervise the Treaties as heretofore.

So much for the Political Department, which, the Princes contend, through its officers supervising the treaties interferes between the Prince and his subjects, and in the internal administration of the State; takes possession of lands; imposes taxes, and forces the British Indian régime upon the Princes against their own judgment, thus diminishing their authority.

Space forbids accounts of the surprising feats of the Department in this connection, but a great deal of evidence was placed before the Harcourt Butler Committee in support of these charges.

Small details sometimes convey psychology rather clearly. While the Government of India anxiously placates possible British Indian voters by renaming the untouchables "depressed classes", the Eurasians, "Anglo Indians", and so on, the Political Department, given charge of the States section of the *Imperial Gazetteer,* proceeds to change "dynasty" into "family" and "princess" into "Rani's daughter," to evade the word "throne" by using the term *"gadi,"* which means the same thing in the vernacular; to eliminate the word "governing" from "full governing powers"; to expunge the term "principality"; etc.

At Darbars and receptions, political officers are given precedence over ruling princes, who have the title of "Highness" and a salute of guns. The attitude is reflected in the amusing spectacle of the junior Political officer, essentially of middle-class origin, doing his best to evade addressing a ruling prince as

"Your Highness" and using instead the expression "Maharaja Saheb," meaning literally Great King and Lord.

Such trifling meannesses as these and the editing of States' history to the disadvantage of the States, strike the observer as hardly worthy of a great civilized power. By the sensitive Indian, whose long line of ancestry is quite as authentic as anything the West can show, they are taken as sheer bad breeding or calculated insults.

All this, however, is but a part of the Princes' problems. Almost equally serious is their economic and fiscal position *vis à vis* British India.

The situation is a peculiar one. In the early days of British Administration, and under the Great Moghals, administration was much less complex and far cheaper than it is now. Land revenue was the financial backbone of the State, and allies and vassals contributed men and money and arms to its defence. Each State, and even great nobles, owned their mints and currencies under certain regulations enforced according to the ability of the overlord. Many had their own fisc, likewise customs, octroi, and what not. Sometimes the States worked mines or other monopolies.

Coming into India, the British made their treaties with the States, quite naturally to the best advantage. They demanded that the junior partner should contribute towards the general defence in cash, in men and arms, and, where enough cash was not available, by means of ceded lands.

Ceded lands means that the State hands over so much territory to the British, retaining its nominal sovereignty. Which lands the British administrate and whose revenues they retain by way of tribute. The catch in this usually is that the value of the land increases over the original amount of the tribute to the profit of the British, who find it difficult to return any of the revenues.

Just to get the picture quite clear, it must be realized that in so far as the Princes are concerned, all they get from the British is external security and liberty to rule within their own borders peacefully. From the financial point of view, absolutely nothing else.

For their external security, the Princes pay, all together, about three million dollars a year (Rs8,244,384) in cash, plus an unknown amount in ceded lands, plus their own standing armies aggregating about fifty thousand men raised, equipped, maintained at their own expense according to certain defined standards set by the British, and liable to be called upon for first line Imperial service.

The British maintain in India, roughly, an army of two hundred and twenty-five thousand men. Their annual military expenditure is between one hundred and ninety-nine and one hundred and ninety-five millions of dollars (54 to 59.6 crores of rupees). But it must be borne in mind that a certain part of this army is for internal security—the security of the British in India with which the States are not concerned—so that the States claim that not more than forty-five crores of this expenditure should be counted for general defence. Their total share, they state, should be about eleven crores, nearly four million dollars, and they are now paying more than their share.

All this is debatable. What seems more knotty is the problem of indirect taxation by the British in India, from which the States suffer without any return whatsoever in the form of administrative benefits.

The British, when they began their task in India, abolished, by treaty, etc., nearly all internal and States customs lines and transit duties.

It didn't matter so vitally because, in those days, the village was the economic unit, self-supporting and self-sufficing. India consumed but little in the way of imported goods. Nor did it matter for many years, because the Government of India's fiscal policy was not Protectionist. But, between 1901 and today, the increase in consumption of imported goods, and in tariff duties has brought the Governments revenue from the latter source up from five crores of rupees, about seventeen million dollars, to forty-five crores, about one hundred and fifty million dollars.

The States claim that, tariff duties being really a consumer's tax, and their seventy-one million subjects being heavy consumers of imported goods, they pay about ten crores, say thirty-three

million dollars, of this revenue, for which they get absolutely nothing. Moreover, they claim, it constitutes a form of indirect taxation, whose imposition they have no voice at all.

Take again the question of currency and mint. Nearly all the States have been obliged, in one way or another, to give up their mints, some on the basis of a small compensation, the majority without any return. While admitting the benefits of a uniform currency, the States point out that the Government of India derives an annual profit of about four crores, thirteen million dollars, from this source, to which the States using the currency contribute about three million, eighty-nine lakhs of rupees, for which they get nothing.

When the medium of exchange has not full value, the surplus between the nominal and the real is left in the hands of the Government, to dispose of as it wishes. On coinage, this becomes sheer profit. As regards note issues, it is usually kept as "reserves." When these are not kept in cash but the balance of accounts invested in Government securities, they really constitute a loan from the people using the currency to the Government, enabling the latter to carry on its capital programme without unduly burdening the public debt.

The States, together with a large body of public opinion in British India, are not altogether happy as to the manner in which these reserves are utilized. The practice of transferring large funds to London, and locating the reserves there, seems to them questionable on grounds of economic justice to India. On several occasions these funds have been used to replenish the cash balances of the Secretary of State for India, in London. Frequently and indiscriminately they are used for the maintenance of the exchange rate between England and India, and these manipulations affect prices and wages in the Indian States.

A high exchange benefits the importer. But the Indian States, like most of India, are more interested in exports than in imports. They claim that, at the very least, they should have some voice in these policies, and some return from the profits.

As it is, they are expected, and constantly exhorted, to bring their administration up to date, which means increasing its ex-

pense. They claim that not only is such a course impossible, given their present revenue, but that they cannot possibly tax their people any further on the present basis. The per capita annual tax in the States amounts to about Rs. seven per head, two dollars and a half. In British India, it is about Rs. six per head, about two dollars. But British India has a number of other sources of revenue, in the form of indirect taxation, like the two noted above and such things as income tax, opium and salt monopoly, excise, railways, posts, and telegraphs, etc., which are denied to the States, though the States are consumers.

By means of this sort of indirect taxation without returns in the shape of cash or administrative benefits, or representation, the States are steadily drained of very large amounts annually, and so become poorer and poorer. And at present they are perfectly helpless.

Now the situation becomes a little clearer. When the Indian Princes make long speeches about States' rights, etc., they are not opposing Dominion Status or any other reform because they wish to retain the present fabric of government in India. They do wish to retain the British connection, as do most thinking people in British India. But they want reforms in their position just as badly as British Indians want adjustments in theirs.

What the Princes do, very loudly and clearly, state is that they are opposed to any further constitution making without some prior adjustment of their economic and political relations with the Government of India. They view with dismay the prospect of perpetuating their present unfortunate condition under, say, a new Dominion Status scheme. Should this happen, their future would become one of dismal uncertainty.

What the Princes suggest, by way of a possible solution, is that they should federate, and that federated Indian India should meet federated British India on terms of fair equality, each speaking with one voice, to discuss and agree upon policies affecting India as an organic whole. In other respects, their relations should be direct with the Crown, like those of British India.

Alas, it sounds too good to be true. But perhaps something may come of it which will bring a united India within sight.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

COWS AND CULTIVATORS

"FIVE acres and a cow!" was once an electioneering slogan in England. Had the politicians who employed it ever come to India they might have been a little less glib. For acres and a cow is the basis of a very great deal of India's economic problem.

All in all, there are about one hundred and ninety-eight of India's three hundred and eighteen million people directly dependent upon about two hundred and fifty million acres of arable land and one hundred and fifty million head of cattle, for their existence. These one hundred and ninety-eight million include about fifty-five million cultivators, who farm the two hundred and fifty million acres, leaving fifty million acres fallow, about one hundred and twenty-three million who are their families and dependents, and twenty million who own no land but work as farm laborers.

To complete the picture, you have about one hundred and five million more who are landless and poverty-stricken. These include little shopkeepers, craftsmen, coolies, factory workers, casual laborers, criminal tribes, aborigines, plantation hands, etc. A large proportion of these, especially the factory workers, come from the villages to the towns, only to flock back when seasons of industrial depression or strikes make life in cities impossible. The criminal tribes steal for a living; the aborigines scratch around in the jungle as best they can. Some, like the Bhils of Idar and Polo States, are settling down and taking up little land of their own.

Even if you had excellent land and excellent cattle, to say nothing of a fairly constant water supply, such a heavy pressure

on the land would still make existence difficult. As it is, a great part of India's farm lands is just about at exhaustion point; a very great part depends upon the annual monsoon for its water; and at best its cattle are poor.

Moreover, to add to the economic difficulties of farming, you do not often find a man's holdings consolidated into one piece. For reasons which are still a little obscure to me, there is a steady tendency to what is called fragmentation—that is, at the death of a cultivator his heirs divide up the land as equally as possible and the division not only results in yet smaller holdings, but in scattered acreage—a third of an acre here, a quarter there, an eighth somewhere else.

This steady process is put down to custom and inheritance, but there is a snag about it somewhere because fragmentation has never been as acute as it is now. Dr. Mann, the finest agricultural expert in India, who has done so much splendid work for Hyderabad State among other things, points out, in his *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village,* that in the last sixty or seventy years the character of land holding has entirely changed—

> In pre- British days (he says) and in the early days of British rule the holdings were usually of a fair size, and frequently more than nine or ten acres, while individual holdings of less than two acres were hardly known. Now the number of holdings is more than doubled and 81 per cent of these holdings are under ten acres in size, while no less than 60 per cent are under five acres.

Something, it would seem, has happened in recent years to accelerate the process of fragmentation. One immediately thinks of two things, namely, the impoverishment and destruction of the upper classes by the East India Company, and, secondly, increased pressure upon the land caused by the destruction of Indian industries and the consequent disintegration of its economic balance.

There is no question but that in pre-British days India was economically sounder and its people far richer. Traveller after traveller of all nationalities has left accounts describing the rich trade of India. Somewhere about 50 A. D. an Egyptian Greek

merchant wrote a short work called *Periplus Mario Erythraei,* describing the principal ports where Indian products were exchanged. The main centre was the Persian gulf, where the Arabs and Phœnicians held most of the carrying trade. Spices and muslins were brought by the Indians and sometimes by the Arabs themselves from Patala, near Sind (now under the sea), Broach, Masulipatam on the Madras Coast, etc., up to the ports on either side of the gulf of Aden, and thence taken by the Arabs to Greece, Egypt and Rome.

Pliny talks of the metals and precious stones of India, and especially Bengal, and mentions the superior cotton fabrics of India. Arrian, in 150 A. D., describes these again. Suleiman, an Arab writer, living about 850 A. D., quoting earlier writers such as Ibn Hanifa, speaks of the muslins of Calicut as the most extraordinary in the world "woven to that degree of fineness that they may be drawn through a ring of middling size."

Cotton was introduced into China from India. Marco Polo describes the cotton muslins of Masulipatam "which looked like tissues of spiders' web." Ibn Batuta, in his *Travels,* mentions India in 1334–42 and speaks in especial of the richness of Bengal. Mahuan, Chinese traveller who wrote a work called *Ying Yai Shen Lau*—a general account of the shores of the ocean—speaks of the marvellous cotton fabrics of India, at the beginning of the 15th century, and also mentions silk growing and manufacture in Bengal.

The Moghal Emperors did a great deal to encourage Indian crafts. Akbar the Great, for instance, founded Fatehpur as a center for the arts and industries of India, and State factories were built in Lahore, Agra, Kashmir, Ahmedabad, etc. Bernier, a French traveller of the sixteenth century, describes within the Fort at Delhi large halls, called *Karkhanas* or workshops, given over to embroiderers, goldsmiths, painters, silk and brocade manufacturers, and "those fine muslins of which are made turbans, girdles with golden flowers, and the fine drawers worn by females, beautifully embroidered with needle work," as well as many other arts and crafts.

The descriptions are endless. Linschoten, a Dutchman who

was sent specially to observe the trade and manufactures of India, Fitch, Frederick, and Pyrard, to say nothing of Tavernier and others, give us a picture of thronged and thriving ports and inland cities, where people of all nations and creeds lived and worked in peace and prosperity.

Accounts survive of the many different kinds of fine muslin which were manufactured, such as *Malmakhas,* for instance, the ring muslin reserved for the private use of the Emperors, which is thus specified: Number of threads, eighteen hundred to nineteen hundred. Average weight: a little over three ounces. Dimensions, ten by one yard. *Jhuna,* which was worn by ladies of the wealthy classes, dancers, etc., you find detailed as one thousand threads, weight eight and one-half ounces. Dimensions, twenty by one yards. *Sab Nam* (evening dew because when spread over the bleaching field it looked like dew on the grass) seven hundred to thirteen hundred threads, ten to thirteen ounces, twenty by one yard.

The East India Company tore through all the finely adjusted economic system which made these marvellous crafts possible, as a rhinoceros might tear through ring muslin. Not only did they replace the imperial protection and care by free trade—which at once led to replacement of the finer article by the cheaper, and flooded the country with foreign goods—but actually penalized its chief industries, weaving and spinning.

An illustration of the first difficulty is given by the immediate consequences of British annexation of Oudh upon the shoemakers of Lucknow. In the days of the kings of Oudh, a great industry in embroidered shoes existed in their capital, because the workers were not allowed to use anything but the finest gold wire, and the quality of their product was famous everywhere.

With British annexation all restrictions were removed and cheap shoes from elsewhere flooded the place and killed the local product.

As for the silk and muslin trade, the British discouraged their export to England by heavy duties, so that by 1823 you find Henry S. Tucker, a Director of the East India Company, reporting that:

> partly from the operation of a duty of 67 per cent but chiefly from the effect of superior machinery, the cotton fabrics which heretofore constituted the staple of India have not only been displaced in England, but we actually export our cotton manufactures to supply part of the consumption of our Asiatic possessions. *India is thus reduced from the state of a manufacturing to an agricultural country.*

Today, you find in their turn British goods being displaced by yet cheaper and shoddier Japanese, Italian and other makes.

What happened to the miserable craftsmen? They went to increase the floating population dependent upon the land. Not all in one mass, of course, but gradually losing their positions and their crafts.

Obviously, with such a heavy strain upon it, the land grows poorer and poorer. In order to get just enough to eat, the peasant must cultivate every possible inch, for food crops, all the time. When the situation was easier he could leave part of his land fallow each year. But not now. This aspect of the situation was brought to my attention by a group of villagers in Western India, as we talked one day. They complained bitterly of the impoverishment of the land, and finally an older man spoke: "In the old days," he said, "we used to cultivate only half our holding one year, and half the next year. In that way we gave our land a rest. Now we cannot do that. Taxes make it difficult, and we haven't enough to live on." He looked at me imploringly: "You are going to Delhi. Won't you please explain this to the Viceroy and ask him to help us."

"Fertilizers," one thinks immediately. But here there is a very great difficulty. Neither Hindu nor Musalman cares to use nightsoil for that purpose—it is against caste rules, and against the fastidious sense of cleanliness in this respect. Moreover it may have drawbacks, for I remember one summer in the Nilgiris when no European would buy strawberries or locally grown vegetables because the particular caste engaged in this truck farming, specially designed for the Ootacamund market, used night soil fertilizer and somebody whispered: "Typhoid."

Animal fertilizer is unavailable because it is used for fuel.

And it is all very well to inveigh against this practice, but as one goes through district after district, one wonders what else the villager can use. There is very little available timber, and he certainly has not enough cash to buy coal. Artificial fertilizers are quite out of the question. They take money, and in between crop and crop, or even just before the harvest, the villager is lucky if he doesn't have to go to the bannia (money lender) to get a small loan *in kind,* so as not to starve before he can gather his crop in.

If the monsoon fails—it means famine and death. Famine reserves have been a feature of government finance since the days when Warren Hastings built the huge granary in Patna.

The cow question in India is another problem. Cows, of course, are sacred in Hinduism. They may not be killed, nor their flesh eaten. Even Musalmans today do not care to eat much beef or to drink cows' milk, because everyone knows that the average cow is of poor quality and very often tuberculous. They become tuberculous both through infection and because they cannot be properly fed.

The sacred bull, who wanders about in city and village streets, has quite a good time. He eats where and when he pleases, and nobody refuses him. He can take the food out of a coolie's hands and no protest will arise. Though a movement for castration is slowly growing, it is not widespread, and these bulls do much to prevent proper breeding of cattle.

The cow does not wander about in the same way. But there is little or no grazing ground available, and the *ryot* can't afford fodder or oil cake.

The hardy buffalo, grazing in the rough jungle, does much better, and provides milk and butter with a higher fat content—an excellent thing in India. The scrawny goat provides meat.

What are you to do about it? You can rave about ignorance, bad farming, poor cattle, illiteracy, Hinduism, and all the rest. But you have to deal with fundamental problems of existing, abject poverty—which means that the *ryot* can afford nothing at all. You have to consider the question of water—and the *ryot* can hardly afford such expenses as sinking good wells.

In Punjab, in Hyderabad Deccan, and in Mysore, great government irrigation works have done wonders in this direction. But wonders remain to be done elsewhere.

You have to consider the fuel problem, and with that the problem of afforestation, failing which India grows dryer and dryer. You have again to think of the expense of good selected seed, which the *ryot* can hardly afford. And when you realize that twenty dollars is more than he can pay for a simple plough, you see the question of improved farm implements in another light.

Genuine efforts are being made by the Government, especially in Punjab, to improve the lot of the peasant. But always one feels in India the lack of any broad, all-India vision. In a country so dependent upon agriculture there has been nothing worth mentioning in the way of a Central Department of Agriculture, such as exists in Washington, until the creation, in the last two years, of the Council of Agricultural Research for which comparatively small funds are allocated.

Going over experimental agricultural and dairy farms, one was always haunted by the suspicion that, run as they are on good modern lines, there exists a gulf between them and the possibilities of the *ryot* which does much to lessen their usefulness. Perhaps the most impressive work is that which has resulted in preserving and improving the famous breed of Hissar bulls, and the social uplift work of Gurgaon where Mr. Brayne tackled the rural problem as a whole, taking into consideration such things as slight but valuable improvements on the plough and the Persian wheel, preserving wells from pollution, educating the women as well as the men in simple but improved methods of living, so that while the husband attended the school of practical agriculture, the wife went to the school of practical domestic economy.

Coöperation, and coöperative credit have done a great deal in the Punjab. The one snag there is that the *ryot* often needs very small sums indeed, and for those he still resorts to the *bannia*. Once he goes there, compound interest strangles him.

Land taxation and assessment form one of the perpetual debating themes of India. On the one hand, you hear that the

"Guarding the Front Door to India, British Planes Near Quetta."

incidence of taxation is very light indeed—it is stated to work out at about two rupees per acre. It would not seem that this should put the *ryot* in debt. But taxes have to be collected at a certain period, and if the monsoon is late, the *ryot* has to borrow the money. If the monsoon fails, he may obtain a remission of all or part of his taxes—for which he usually has to bribe the subordinate officials at least to the extent of a rupee. Sometimes part is, under these circumstances, deferred until next year, and the extra payment then swallows up any possible profit.

A few extracts from the findings of the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee throw vivid sidelights on little understood aspects of this problem. Among its conclusions you find, under the heading Land Revenue:

> (14) The Indian systems are the result of a gradual process of evolution from indigenous practices, and they have been moulded into their present shape by British officers quite independently of each other to suit local circumstances in different provinces.

This paragraph alone shows the extreme difficulty of judging the land revenue system as a whole. One dare not generalize without a very special detailed knowledge.

Paragraph 17 points out that:

> Application of the canons of taxations to land revenue.
>
> 1) Certainty: This canon is satisfied.
>
> 2) Convenience: Convenience has in some respects been sacrificed to certainty.
>
> *The inelasticity of the systems drives a number of people to the moneylender during bad seasons.*
>
> The system of making settlements that last only for a generation may necessitate a change in the standard of living when the period comes to a close.
>
> When the process of settlement continues for years and involves meticulous enquiry by a very large staff, the inconvenience and expense to the ryot concerned is very considerable.
>
> 4) Ability: Land revenue is essentially a tax on things and not on persons and as such it is not a tax to which the doctrine of progression can be applied. The Committee therefore confine their attention to the question of the burden of the land revenue

> on the land, in other words, the proportion which the Government demand bears to the economic rental or net profits in the different provinces. Even in this respect they are unable to discover any acceptable basis of comparison, and *are forced to the conclusion that uncertainty as to both the basis of the assessment and the rate is one of the chief respects in which the system is open to criticism.*

The Committee recommended that the basis of taxation should be the gross produce less cost of production, and also pointed out in paragraph 28.

> Where land outside the limits of towns or villages which is assessed to land revenue on the basis of its crop value is diverted from use for cultivation, it should be liable to re-assessment on the basis of its annual value for other purposes.

These very small extracts suffice to show that the land revenue system in India, and its effect upon the *ryot,* is not merely a matter of just how much or how little in round figures per acre per annum the *ryot* has to pay.

"That," as the late Bert Savoy used to remark, "ain't the half of it, dearie!"

Moreover, quite apart from actual direct taxation, one must take into consideration indirect taxation, such as the salt tax, which yields a revenue of something like twenty-five million dollars a year to the Government and which, since salt is a necessity of life, is in the nature of a poll tax. One must also remember the Customs yield of over one hundred and fifty million dollars a year, which is a consumers' tax. India's principal imports are cotton manufactures, sugar, iron and steel, machinery. At least two of these items are necessities all over India.

Nor is it perfectly fair to say that the tariff is altruistically imposed, or imposed by reason of the efforts of Indian members of the Legislature who wish to protect India's nascent industries. That is not altogether true. Customs are the most important source of Government revenue, so important that the Government could not view without concern the diversion of even five million dollars of it through the ports of Nawanagar State. It

provides over a third of the total revenue of the Government of India.

The following figures show how it has grown since 1900.

	Revenue. In crores of rupees
1900–1	5.06
1910–11	9.93
1920–21	31.90
1924–25	45.75 (a crore is ten million rupees)

The sudden jump in these returns occurred during the bad period of India's finances, between 1918–19 and 1922–23, when deficits of over ninety-eight crores of rupees had to be provided for.

One cannot, obviously, blame the existing British officials for the state of affairs. If all the British packed up and left India tomorrow this problem would remain to tax the most statesman-like mind.

Taxation, for instance, could not possibly be made any lighter, though certain economies as to collection might be effected. But even lighter taxation would not really assist the cultivator and the landless poor so very much. Constructive measures are needed for that. There is, for instance, the urgent necessity for dealing with the problem of illiteracy.

Education costs money. It would seem almost impossible to tax the cultivator, on the other hand, any further. Nor could you ask him to pay directly for primary education for his children. Not only is it very much against Indian tradition which believes that education, being above price, should be free, but he is too poor. At present education, like other nation building departments, is in the hands of the Provincial Governments, whose financial position must vary not only according to the general state of the province, but also according to the year.

Perhaps the Government of India might help in certain directions. At present the Provinces have to contribute about twenty-nine million dollars a year to the Central Government. Were the Government of India able to remit this, it might go toward nation building work.

Were the Government of India able to undertake an extensive system of "federal" highways and roads, linking up road communications all over India and thus opening up districts untouched by railways, etc., it would undoubtedly ease the economic situation, besides making the problem of reaching rural areas much simpler. A really well-organized and active "federal" Department of Agriculture might also help, as would possibly a certain number of "federal" colleges for the training of teachers and experts.

But certainly the Government of India has no money for such things now. How to get it is another problem.

The finances of the Government of India are, it must be remembered, separate from those of the Provincial Governments, which run themselves and pay certain contributions towards the central government. This makes discussion of financial problems just a little difficult.

On the Government of India Budget, for instance, you discover that civil administration costs about thirty-three million dollars a year. Swarajists fight about this, and say that the administration is far too expensive for a poor country. Yet, on the whole, the Services are underpaid. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that at least half of the officials are, as yet, British, whose financial interests do not lie in India, so that a proportion of their pay and all their pensions form an invisible export to England. While this is a drain upon the country, it is a diminishing one, and one that could not possibly be eliminated in one fell swoop.

Moreover, it is very doubtful that the actual cost of administration could be lessened, though items might be redistributed. The only real benefit, supposing that all the services were Indianized, would be more money remaining in India.

A very expensive item is that of the army, which costs fifty to sixty crores of rupees a year, say anything up to one hundred and ninety million dollars—all in all about half the total expenditure of the Government of India. This is another item Swarajists are always wailing over. The answer usually given

is that there are only two hundred and twenty-five thousand troops in India, and that, even so, enough is not spent on them.

But it is important, in this connection, to analyze the make-up and distribution of the troops. The army in India is divided into a Field Army, organized for foreign service, in which the proportion of British troops is about one to three; a Covering Army which is almost wholly Indian, to keep order on the Frontier; and an Internal Security Force, really for the protection of British in India, which is largely made up of British troops. There are about seven thousand officers, and sixty-one thousand five hundred British troops, the heaviest item of the military budget.

Analyzed, therefore, the British army in India does become an army of occupation. When the Swarajists complain, they are thinking of this. When the British talk about defence of the Frontier, as a motive for British occupation of India, Swarajists laugh sarcastically because they think that anyhow Indian troops are already taking care of that, and all they need is more Indian officers.

Again, changes in this direction could not be achieved instantly. At present about ten Indians a year pass through Sandhurst and receive King's Commissions. The Indian Sandhurst Committee under General Skeen unanimously recommended a scheme which would Indianize fifty per cent of the officers somewhere around 1953, but no action has yet been taken on this.

No Indians serve as gunners in the Artillery, there are none in the Tank Corps, and no Indian units, or training of any kind for Indians, in the Air Force. When the British suggest that India cannot defend herself, they are perfectly right. When the Swarajists swear at the British, and ask what the Internal Security Force is for, if not an army of occupation, and whether the Field Army is to serve India or the Empire on foreign service, they are also perfectly right.

But supposing that all this is rectified, and a real Indian Army set on foot—artillery, air force, etc., it is unlikely that it actually cost so much less in actual expenditures. There would

have to be arsenals, and all the necessary arrangements for providing equipment, for instance.

Economies might be effected in the sense that there might be less building of expensive barracks, only to be shifted or abandoned within a few years. There might be less of the very expensive system of troop transfers, which exists at present, whereby not only must battalions periodically be replaced by others from England, but those in India are periodically transferred to other stations, not the nearest, but at very long distances.

For instance, a battalion leaves Quetta, in the North. It does not change with one in say Karachi, a few hours distant, but is more likely to do so with one in some place like Shillong, at the far end of India. And the reason for this extravagance is inherent in the necessary policy of an army of occupation—the troops must not fraternize, become too friendly, or form ties in a given locality.

Not in the actual monies spent, but in the way they are spent, and in the proportion which must go out of India under these circumstances, lies the undue expense of the army in India. It is extravagant because of the waste, and because, as the Mesapotamian Campaign clearly proved, it is by no means efficient or up-to-date.

Studying the cultivator and his cow, you see, you are brought to the whole economic and political problem of India. Nothing could be more superficial than to attribute his wretched condition either to ignorance, to shiftlessness, or, as so many Europeans do, to the baneful effects of Hinduism. All these things, including the deplorable aspects of Hinduism, are symptoms, whose cause lies much deeper. If Hinduism were destroyed tomorrow, it is more than doubtful that these evils would disappear. The cultivator would not suddenly find himself in possession of fifty acres for instance, or of schools, roads, grazing land, fuel. . . .

True, caste and religious prejudices do prevent certain kinds of intensive farming. In China, where they do not exist, and where farming is, if anything, more intensive than anywhere in the world, infanticide has long been an economic symptom, and the slightest upset in the political and economic structure results

in fearful famines. Recently something like forty-four million Chinese perished of famine in one part of China.

Under Hinduism and Islam together in India, there evolved a closely knit, beautifully adequate economic system. It had its defects, but it made the country self-sufficient, self-supporting and unquestionably very rich. In some respects the caste system, as it functioned economically, not only made for excellent workmanship—a thing of culture—but for stability. Caste brothers helped each other, and looked after their own poor for instance.

Beneath the Western impact, the whole economic structure of the country lost its balance, and, like all finely-knit structures, attack in one direction meant really complete disorganization of the whole thing. Today it is a monstrous figure, with its tiny head of about sixteen million more or less decently comfortable people, and three hundred and two million always on the minimum line.

Hinduism, being part of all this, has suffered. To resist attack it had to become rigidly defensive, and ultra-Hinduistic—just as the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, under a Protestant domination, became exaggeratedly Roman Catholic and hidebound. Under these circumstances all sorts of abuses spring up.

It is, in all probability, quite true that ultra-orthodox Hinduism today is a barrier to social progress. This fact is perfectly realized by Indians themselves. But to state, as Lord Meston did recently in America, that orthodox Hinduism is at the basis of the present movement for self-government, because it fears and therefore opposes, Western ideals of progress, is to show a lamentable ignorance of simple facts.

Your ultra-orthodox Brahmin is, if anything, a supporter of the present régime, for the very obvious reason that British policy in India, definitely opposing all interference with the religious beliefs and customs of the people, protects the ultra-orthodox, conservative section of Hinduism, and for that matter of Islam also, as it has never been protected before.

Thus, and for this reason, you find that with very few exceptions—I can remember only Pandit Malaviya at the moment—the leaders and the bulk of the rank and file of the nationalist

movement in India are not only political but social reformers. The Nehrus, Diwan Chaman Lal, Mrs. Naidu, Tagore, Mrs. Besant in her day, Gandhi himself, are certainly not ultraorthodox Brahmins. The most powerful of all the semi-political Hindu organizations, the *Arya Samaj* to which Lala Lajpat Rai belonged, and of which Mahatma Hans Raj is such a distinguished figure, is a reform organization.

One of the most amazing features of the political disturbances of 1930 was provided by the meeting of the All India Sanatan Dharma Conference in Bombay, in June. This is the ultraorthodox Hindu organization, and it was violently demonstrated against, and almost broken up, by excited crowds of Indians, all nationalists, who broke into the courtyard and, among other things, tore down the Union Jacks with which it was decorated.

Returning to our cultivator, who has squatted patiently on the ground while we wandered around the mazes of history, Government finance, Hinduism, and the nationalist movement, one wonders what he thinks about it all.

Usually he is pictured as not thinking at all. Hard-working enough, though a great part of his time must necessarily be unoccupied, since he has no secondary occupation upon which to fall back during those months when actual cultivating must be at a temporary standstill, poor, but on the whole amazingly gentle, clean-living, and kind except when the hot emotion which is latent in all Indians, flares up—what is in his head?

One can judge only by observation and talk. This led one to think that he is not quite as passive and contented as he is generally represented. Tradition, and stories handed down in the evenings when men sit together, smoking their strong country tobacco, either under a tree, or on a flat, cleared space of stamped down mud, convince him that life was not always like this in India. Something, he feels, has gone wrong.

Often there is someone in the village who can read a vernacular newspaper, or who has been to a nearby town and heard all the gossip and discussion in the bazaar. Through him the villagers learn that there is a *Sarkar* who is "satanic." The word "satanic" in India resembles closely, and is probably derived

from, the same Sanscrit term that remains in modern Hindi, and means to tease, trouble, or annoy.

The *Sarkar,* therefore, is not good. Sometimes the villager, in very remote districts, has been known to erect a stone, representing this evil god the *Sarkar,* and smear it with red paint, and propitiate it with rites as he does other unpleasant spirits. So he comes to feel that perhaps if the *Sarkar* were to be disposed of, the golden age might return.

More and more, the Congress Party and other bodies are sending agitators into the villages to enhance this impression and above all to present to the villagers the appealing thought that it is meritorious not to pay their taxes. The peasant is illiterate, ignorant, conservative, but he is not stupid. Like other peasants he will probably never organize, but, like other peasants, he can be roused to frightful violence.

As usual, in thinking about India, you cannot study one problem without finding that it leads to vaster, more fundamental issues. You cannot blame or criticize anyone very much. You can only observe the workings of karma—the stupidity of the fathers being visited upon the third and fourth generation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE POWER OF INDIA

FOR three days I had travelled South . . . South . . . South towards Ceylon!

Late on an evening toward the beginning of the hot weather there had been that last hesitant pause on the threshold of the dear house in Hyderabad where I had so often come and gone; the quick wrench as I stooped and passed under the Koran Sharif held over my head by a member of the family in the old Muslim ritual of departure; the big Buick at the door with Jani Mian—The Tiger of the Deccan I used to call him—smiling at the wheel.

There were the servants grouped on the steps, old Tatia half weeping on the first, ayah, as the car began to move, running after it to catch my hand, Mistry, the cook, calling goodbye, Khaja, the cook's mate, the Sikh guards, the police—all turned out to bid me farewell.

And at the station, my tutor, his veiled wife, and the little son so soon to die, bearing garlands of jasmine and roses which they slipped over my head. . . .

The fat guard said the train was going to start. Quickly I embraced the little group of friends who stood around me, and jumped into my reserved carriage. Hanging out of the window I caught the hand of the dearest of all, that stately, keen-eyed woman with the tenderest heart in the world, who, through many months of intimate friendship I had grown to love and admire more than I had ever imagined I could love and admire anyone.

She had nursed me, day and night, through sickness; had fought my battles, and fought with me to calm that intolerance and impatience which had so often led me into unnecessary com-

bat. We had laughed and wept together, shared each other's joys and troubles, argued heatedly, or played like children. How often I had watched her efficiently running her household of eighteen or twenty servants, her large family of children and grandchildren, caring for her hardworked, brilliant husband—that white-haired, modest little man who, though he had never received quite all the recognition he deserved, I had come to realize was the greatest living Indian statesman.

I thought of him, working from early morn until late at night, getting up before dawn to pray; seeing rich and poor alike as they flocked to his house always wanting something; honest, clean-living, finding his greatest strength and solace in his God.

And of my other friends. The old rajah far to the North, who, Rajput of Rajputs, yet so closely resembled in many ways my Muslim friend. I remembered him at his simple evening meal of fruit and milk, smiling and petting his small grandchildren as they came to say good night in their little white pyjamas. His daughter, too, that quietly dignified princess who could so suddenly dissolve into helpless laughter over some ridiculous jest. His clever, cultured sons with whom I had gone camping and driving so often, and who had become as brothers to me.

Further North yet, somewhere in the jungle or in a temple, that white-clad ascetic at whose feet I had so often sat, and from whom I had received priceless gifts.

But there were so many, of all races, creeds, castes—a few British, many Indians, who had given me affection and friendship. The train slowly gathered speed. Still reluctant to let go, I held my friend's hand. Her face crumpled up with the pain of parting. I felt my own mouth working.

All these figures blurred into one . . . no longer impassive, enigmatic, inscrutable, but dearly familiar and compelling . . . India!

"Goodbye, goodbye! God keep you! Come back quickly! *Khoda hafiz! Khoda hafiz! Firmanillah!*

Past Bezwada where at five in the morning I changed trains in my pyjamas; past Masulipatam, Madras, Trichinipoli of the Golden Rock, Tanjore, Madura . . . Heavens! how hot it was

as we ran through flat green plains patterned with cocoanut palms, from whose midst rose great temples, carved from base to peak. . . .

The green gave way to sand and foaming surf. Danushkodi, where the waters of the Bay of Bengal meet the Indian Ocean in perpetual unrest!

It was near sunset as I stepped on the tossing cockleshell of a boat which ferries you over to Ceylon. Standing in the stern watching the shores of India fade into a thin, dark line against the brilliant sea, I wished that I dared weep.

India—what had it done to me, the Westerner coming from the most modern and living of all Western countries? Had it answered my questions? How had I come to love it so that to leave it was like going into exile?

I had wandered about, up and down through the land, from the far North to the far South, in the Himalayas, in the jungles of the plains, through great cities and small villages. I had seen the Hindu Kush, a wall of snow glittering beneath a deep blue sky. I had been in electric storms on the tops of hills, with clouds all about me and lightning playing through them. In dust-storms in the Punjab, where in ten minutes broad daylight became night.

I had seen, at midnight, the monsoon seas breaking on the shore in lines of green fire; had wandered through the strange, half dead city of the Amirs of Sind—Hyderabad where every house has a wind chute sticking up from the roof to catch the slightest breeze that may relieve the deadly heat of summer. Through so many other cities, Lahore, Bombay, Calcutta, Patna, Delhi, Hyderabad of the Deccan, all buzzing with life and vitality.

I had been to weddings and births. Watched Indians die; watched their courage and stoicism under the stress of pain, as they were operated on; watched festivals and mournings; ceremonies in temples and masjids; mobs rioting and streets deserted as all stores closed in *hartal.*

What had it all meant to me, the average Westerner, living in India rather than just seeing it from the outside?

What mattered? Looking back at that vanishing shore, I

realized how very little politics, the woes of the British, the woes of the Indians, as we understand them, really counted. Against that immense, tapestried background of Indian history, Indian tradition, Indian culture, all the varied pattern of thousands of years of Indian existence, what was one conqueror more or less? If they stayed, they became Indian. If they refused to become Indian, their hold weakened just the same, India shuddered, and they were lost.

I saw, looking thus, that even in this present situation, nobody was much to blame. The British, puzzled, unhappy, irritated— they were puppets dealing with forces they barely felt. The Indian politician, vociferous, venomous, so often unpleasing —he, too, was a small thing, moved by greater forces.

Each of them, in a sense, fighting for their existence, neither always understanding what it was all about. No, politics were not supremely important to India. Politics are everywhere, always the same.

What, then, was moving India? Because, one realized, something was going through the land like a breath of wind stirring long grass. No one could deny that the people were restless, discontented. India was changing, but that very change, one saw, unlike that of other countries, was not towards Westernization, but towards reassertion of Indian-ness. The conflict, I understood clearly enough, was one of ideals.

Others had seen that too. Superficial observers termed it the conflict of Hinduism with—they dared no longer say Christianity—with Western progress, Western enlightenment, Western ideals. But it was not Hinduism. These people were quite wrong. It was something much stronger, something that had since the dawn of history shaped, influenced, and even at times inspired, Hinduism, the early religions of Egypt, Buddhism, Eastern Christianity, even, in some ways, Islam. It was that which had produced so many great teachers, pointing the way to reality.

"That" was flaming up again in India. It was stirring not only two hundred and eight million varied Hindus, each in his own degree, but seventy million Musalmans as well. These "Hinduism" observers appeared not to realize this fact. They were

too absorbed by political phenomena to study the essential point; that all India was stirring, fermenting so that scum and froth, political demonstrations, Hindu-Muslim conflicts, and all the rest boiled and swirled to the top.

A conflict of ideals. But what ideals? What was India, in its own way, challenging?

It challenged, one realized, the whole of the West. Not Western inventions, Western science, Western conveniences, which India was perfectly ready to adopt insofar as they suited India's convenience. Railroads, motorbuses, gramophones, electric fans, refrigerators, movies, India made no objection to any of these. Her children delightedly used the trains to go on ancient pilgrimages; they piled on the motorbuses as, tied up with bits of string, repaired with bits of kerosene tins, they fled gaily over the long dusty roads. They crowded to the movies, to see old heroic stories and sacred legends played out on the screen. They bought thousands of gramophone records to hear their own artists singing their own songs in Urdu, Tamil, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali.

Not that, then. The challenge was a much deeper thing. A challenge of values, of ethics, of attitude to life.

India, like the rest of the East, had bowed to the illusion of Western superiority, taken it all quite literally—Christianity as the religion of peace and love, of the brotherhood of man. Western education and Western progress as the panacea for the evils of existence. Only perhaps Islam held a little aloof, watching. But Islam had met Christians long before, in the Holy Land.

The West spoke fairly enough, talking of honour, the sanctity of the given word, and of promises; of freedom and enlightenment. It vaunted its poets, its philosophers, its scientists, its classical inheritance from that beautiful, far off Greece, whose greatest philosopher, it forgot to mention, had been inspired through Egypt and Persia, by India.

For years India and all the East really believed all this. Complete subscribers to Nordicism and the theory of the Great Race, Indians did their best to Westernize themselves. It was a disillusionizing period.

This great Western civilization, what was it? The West brought certain material benefits, certain aspects of learning which nobody could deny or for which none could refuse gratitude. But also it seemed to bring a deadly poison. Beneath its hand, the East withered—its morality destroyed, its physical body destroyed, its ancient learning destroyed. Only its vices, added to by the new vices of the West, remained and flourished.

You must admit this would puzzle anyone. India sent its sons to the West—but how many of them returned harmed by that contact. How many others brought back disturbing stories of the great cities they had seen—their teeming poor, filthy, ignorant, wretched, and despised because of their poverty. Stories of vice and immorality, of shameless women and greedy treacherous men.

So this wonderful Western civilization made its own people no more happy, no better off ultimately, than the ancient systems of the East. Bribery might be less obvious, but money in the West could buy almost anything even more easily than in the East. One paid more, that was all. Disease, though it killed less rapidly in milder climates, still rotted the West insidiously, in spite of all its science which substituted drugs for sunlight, and gasoline fumes for air. The farmers and peasants worked just as hard, with tractors and threshing machines, as those of the East with their rude ploughs. Literacy merely made the people the victims of lies spread more rapidly than ever before.

India understood greed; she understood treachery and lies, violence and vice. All that exists wherever humanity exists, is a part of life. But it could not understand a claim to superiority which, as far as it could see, was based upon just these things. It saw that in the West vice hardly troubled any longer even to pay tribute to virtue. The West, India observed, did not revere its holy men. It seemed always to prefer killing them.

It saw the West take possession of other lands, because the people to whom they first belonged were, said the West, ignorant and miserable and it was the sacred duty of the Christian West—"the White Man's Burden"— to bring them enlightenment, education, freedom.

It saw these peoples, in their turn, strive towards Western education, imitating the White Man, and saw the White Man, when this or that individual had successfully obtained the prize, gone through Western universities, Western schools, scornfully deny them equality, and openly declare that Western education spoilt a good Oriental.

Finally, India, the East, saw the West in its frenzy of destruction turn upon itself, and, in the most horrible of all wars—a conflict disgraced by its barbarism, its inhumanity, its slimy filth of propaganda, tear itself to pieces. The forces of Western civilization revealed themselves to the East as forces of sheer, mad, destruction.

Then India shuddered. It did not condemn the peoples of the West. It understood how many of them, also, were bewildered and sickened by all they knew and saw. But it realized that somewhere in the Western scheme existed a dreadful flaw. The West might, it would, work out its own salvation according to its own nature. But for India also, there was a question of self-preservation. Looking into the mirror of life, it saw the same ghastly forces working insidiously upon itself.

From that hour it threw down the challenge. India does not believe in the validity of Western civilization. It does not believe in Western ethics or in Western standards—taken as a whole. It challenges dynamic action with dynamic thought. It challenges the intolerance which conceives of a personal Deity creating, at his pleasure, a Chosen Race to inherit and rifle the earth, with the tolerance which sees all the world as changing forms expressing the same essential divinity. It challenges the intellectual conceit which sees no divinity anywhere, man as the supreme formation of matter, with the spiritual wisdom which realizes the limitations of the senses and of the intellect. It lifts above the five pointed star, the seven pointed!

To the ideal of happiness dependent upon environment, India opposes that of happiness rising above environment. To the force of arms, the power of material wealth and attainments, it opposes the power of spirit, the power of fundamental energy itself. So far, that has never failed India.

That is India's challenge to the West—a question of values, of attitude to existence. India as Vishnu, preserving the sacred flame; as Siva, dancing the dance of creation over the Darkness he has destroyed; even as Kali, garlanded with skulls, smeared with blood, destroying destruction.

India will win. Matter is always moulded by spirit. The immediate conflict is, you see now, of importance only in so far as it may create personal bitterness and fear between races. It will decide, perhaps in the next few years, whether India shall retain its immemorial rôle of interpreter between East and West, of culture fountain for both East and West, or whether, in spite of itself, it is to be driven into the slowly forming alliance of East against West. Whether the conflict of ideals must be resolved into a conflict of action.

This I doubt very seriously. India will never be an aggressive political power except at the expense of all its traditions, all its spiritual force.

But what is this spiritual power of India? Whence comes it? Is there something in its strange, magnetic soil, something in its people? "Why," as a sensitive Russian woman said to me, one might, as we leaned on the marble rail of an ornate terrace in a very modern palace, "why does God seem so much nearer in India?"

It is true. India is God-intoxicated. Not, as the limited view has it, religion mad, but infected by what Plato called the divine madness of the philosopher, the seeker after wisdom. At its highest, and India has always been influenced from the top downwards, it rises above all creeds, all castes, all differences of approach.

In India, you learn not to oppose material life, but to accept it, and, accepting, you become stronger than material life. You learn the beauty of holiness, of self-discipline, but not self-punishment, the romance and excitement of the search for truth and purity rather than for sensation.

But those things are effects, not causes. Nothing of that explains India's spiritual power. I cannot explain. I cannot say why things happen differently in India, or why certain things can-

not be learned so easily or so well elsewhere. Nor can I say why the power of India affects every human being who stays there long enough, even those who resist it. Some for better, some not so well . . . but none return the same.

It may be that India has realized God. Is that the secret of its power?

APPENDIX

THE Berars affair is one of those typically Indian imbroglios which began in sheer corruption, and goes on, partly in sheer ignorance and partly because officialdom hates to admit a mistake. Efforts are made to settle it, bury it, do anything with it, and it is always resurrecting. Therefore it has to be faced, and the story told as accurately as possible.

It begins way back in the early days, when European adventurers of various nations were struggling for a foothold in India. Both British and French made the main aim of their policy alliance with such States as would consent, whose help could be later enlisted to smash the recalcitrant. Taking the weaker for choice, military help would be offered, including officers and soldiers. At a price, of course; the troops usually being paid for by ceding certain revenues, or lands producing the necessary amount.

Such troops were known as "Subsidiary Forces." In the days of Clive, an arrangement was made whereby such a force was stationed in what are called the Northern Sarkars, guarding the road to Madras. This was a military necessity for the British who paid the Nizam 250,000 dollars a year for their occupation of this territory as long as the troops were not requisitioned. Such troops, it may be added, were not only designed for external defence, but to aid in preserving internal law and order.

When Nizam Ali was put on the throne, a new and larger Subsidiary Force was stationed in the State itself and new treaties made, whereby the Nizam, having disbanded his French troops, engaged also to keep an army of his own, amounting to six thousand infantry and nine thousand cavalry, to help the British in

war. From that time on, the British spoke of the Nizam's own army as the "Contingent." Referring to other States, however, the British got into the habit of calling the British Subsidiary Force stationed in them, the "Contingent," and this began a certain confusion of ideas.

To pay for the British force, Nizam Ali ceded the lands he acquired in the campaign against Tippu Sultan. Then it was found that his own army was not very efficient, and British officers were supplied for the training of this, the Contingent proper. Nizam Ali died, Sikandar Jah succeeded, and the fun started.

Frankly, Sikandar Jah was not a capable ruler. That for the first three years of his reign he had a good Prime Minister, was due to the help of the then Resident, also a good man. But when this Minister, Mir Alam, died, the British determined to take no chances. They insisted on their nominee, the Nizam insisted upon his. Finally a compromise was arrived at. The Nizam's Minister, Munir ul Mulk, should be appointed—without real powers. The British nominee, Chandu Lal, who was wholly in the hands of the British, should be his deputy with the real power.

Chandu Lal was altogether a scoundrel. Nothing more corrupt and morally degenerate can be imagined. In looks, strangely enough, his portrait is startlingly like Gandhi; the long nose, the mouth, the small eyes too close together, and the smile. But that is, of course, merely an odd coincidence.

Naturally the Nizam's army loathed Chandu Lal as a low-born adventurer who had supplanted their master. Chandu Lal feared the army, and desired but one thing, somehow to get it under control before it disposed of him. The British also wished to get the Nizam's army under control, because their own Subsidiary Force had shown signs of disaffection at the time of the "White Mutiny" when the British officers of the Coast Army rebelled against the Government. With this suggestion in his head, one, Henry Russell, arrived in Hyderabad as Political Resident. Russell and Chandu Lal agreed perfectly with each other, and soon found their opportunity.

A couple of the Nizam's regiments mutinied for lack of pay; for, part from the British section of the story, Chandu Lal was having a grand time with the State finances. The Resident, backed by this creature, promptly transferred these mutineers to his own command, attached them to the Residency, and recruited others. Thus was initiated the "Hyderabad Contingent" without the slightest treaty right. The Residency paid them, and got paid in return by Chandu Lal, who calmly abstracted the money from the Treasury.

The battalions thus dealt with were called the "Russell Brigade." Fantastic pay was allotted to their British officers, the Commandant getting no less than twenty thousand dollars a year, and the rest in proportion. More and more troops, especially those in Berar, were drawn into the scheme.

Thus supported by the Resident, Chandu Lal really enjoyed himself. The Subsidiary Force, stationed at Jalna and Secunderabad, was exempt from Customs and Excise. Nizam Ali had put Secunderabad under the jurisdiction of the Resident, who had agreed to look after the Excise duties and return its proportion to the State. "A little thing like that?" said Chandu Lal, "O, just keep it. A mere trifle." Chandu Lal cared nothing for money—his passion was power. The British could have all the money they wanted; almost a third of the entire revenue of the State for the Contingent, for instance, about two million dollars. The European officers and Staff alone accounted for six hundred thousand dollars of this.

In about ten years, Chandu Lal had effectively ruined the State. The people first revolted, and then emigrated. He could no longer pay even for the Contingent. Then Mr. Russell decided something must be done, and the firm of Palmer and Co., money-lenders, was called in to make an unsavoury third. Lord Hastings, the then Governor General, was connected with a member of the firm Sir William Rumbold who had married a ward of his. Thus it became possible to lend money to Hyderabad at twenty-five per cent interest, plus huge clandestine bonuses and bribery all around. By this time, even the Directors of the East India Company began to denounce these transactions, but they

were confronted by obstinacy and lack of judgment on the part of the Governor General who refused to credit the facts.

The loans were cleared by the Government's capitalization of the revenue they owed to the Nizam for the Northern Sarkars, thus paying off an alleged debt with a genuine one, and securing the Sarkars for themselves.

Russell made way for Sir Charles Metcalfe, a genuinely honest and decent man, who tried to do something toward reforming the revenue system instituted by Chandu Lal. Chandu Lal had farmed out various districts to middlemen at a price, a good price, and these in turn "trod on the faces" of the people. Though Sir Charles was hampered in every way, even the little he was able to do began to bring the people back to their deserted lands.

Chandu Lal was not happy, but he still had Calcutta behind him. Lord Hastings actually approved a request that the Nizam should give Calcutta eight hundred thousand dollars for city improvements as an expression of friendship, but this was stopped in time by London. Behind Sir Charles Metcalfe's back, Chandu Lal secured a promise that European superintendence of the land revenue collection should be done away with.

Nasir ud Daula succeeded to the throne. Taking hold of the government, he, inspired by Chandu Lal, got rid of the officers in question. Calcutta wondered if this also meant disbandment of the Contingent, and calmly pointed out that should this be the intention, the Government would require one million dollars annually in its stead.

"It's been costing you two million," was the argument, "so you might consider yourself lucky to cut this down to half."

The fact that the Subsidiary Force, the only British army with any justification for its existence, was already being paid for by ceded lands, and that the Contingent had been originally made up of part of the Nizam's own army—stolen from him so to speak by Russell and Chandu Lal, had apparently been forgotten. The Nizam not being a lawyer, replied that he would rather continue the Contingent, and upon this reply was based later contentions to the effect that he accepted the policy of establishing the Contingent.

Five successive Residents supported Chandu Lal who finally reached the point of assigning lands to money-lenders. The State was reduced to chaos, what with hopelessly involved finances, revolts—which the British refused to help quell though their treaty called for such help—and general disorganization. The East India Company interfered from London and said "Chandu Lal must go." Ostensibly he changed the revenue officers, and, secretly, life went on as before. At the age of seventy-seven, Chandu Lal died.

Conditions could not be worse. Useless for the East India Directors to write from London saying that if the Contingent was too great a strain on the Nizam's finances he should be at once released from such unnecessary pressure. Lord Dalhousie, unquestionably one of India's least sympathetic Governors, pressed for a cash settlement or further cession of territory. Territory was Dalhousie's mania, and he managed to lay the foundations of the Mutiny precisely on this account. The Nizam made a big payment in 1851; he mortgaged his jewels—and the British lent him money at twelve per cent interest.

In 1853, then, the British Government presented a final bill for over two million dollars, for this Contingent. For forty years the British had pocketed, with Chandu Lal's help, the Excise duties of Secunderabad, amounting almost to the sum demanded. In 1810, they had reduced their own Subsidiary Force below treaty strength, and again pocketed a very large surplus from the lands ceded in payment, whose value had increased. The Contingent had been imposed upon Hyderabad without the slightest legal right.

But this counted for nothing. The Nizam couldn't pay. The British asked for, instead of the cash, the province of Berar and two other districts, yielding in all a quarter of the State's revenue. Berar was the finest cotton land the Nizam possessed.

The Nizam refused to cede these in perpetuity; the British threatened military pressure. The Nizam reluctantly consented to a compromise and, refusing cession, assigned "exclusive management" of the Berars to the British Resident. The Governor General stated that the transfer was temporary and anyhow after

payment of the debt and deduction for the Contingent, the surplus revenue was to be returned to the Nizam. Dalhousie, admitting that the Government had "never been entitled either by the spirit or the letter of the Treaty of 1800 to require the Nizam to maintain the Contingent" still contended that liberal treatment had been extended to Hyderabad.

Time passed. Sir Salar Jung the Great becoming Minister attempted again and again to have the Berars restored in return for a capital sum. The London *Statesman,* in 1884, reveals that in 1874–75 the Berari peasants revolted in adjoining districts, but remained perfectly happy under Sir Salar Jung. The revolt over, the latter again opened the matter of the Berars, with the result that Sir Richard Mead was sent to Hyderabad to do something about it. "Doing something about it" is a polite way of saying, to stop the agitation.

Sir Richard drove Sir Salar Jung out of office, and the great statesman and loyal friend of the British who had held Hyderabad on the British side during the Mutiny, died of a broken heart. Mead also brought an action against the *Statesman* but withdrew. The viceroy meanwhile tried to discover who had shown private official papers to the *Statesman.*

The revenues of Berar trebled, but the Government also increased its costly establishment there, and further mysterious expenses were added to their accounts, so that Hyderabad was often debited rather than credited.

Under Lord Curzon the matter again came up. He wanted a permanent settlement with a view of merging the Hyderabad Contingent into the British Army and gaining a freer hand in Berar. Visiting the Nizam in 1902 he pressed upon him a treaty renouncing Hyderabad's claim to Berar forever on a basis of an annual rent of about eighty thousand dollars and the abolition of the Hyderabad Contingent. Remark, that the original annual charges of the Contingent for which Berar had been ceded amounted to two million dollars. The Nizam had just previously also had to borrow money to meet with famine stringencies.

The Nizam asked whether there would ever be any chance of a future Government's returning the province. Curzon replied

in the negative. He signed the treaty, retaining technical sovereignty of the Berars, however.

British income tax and land and liquor taxes have quadrupled the revenues of the Berars. During the Viceroyalty of Lord Reading, the present Nizam questioning the validity of pledging posterity, asked for an enquiry into the case and for an account of the money dealings between the two Governments. This was bluntly and haughtily refused by Lord Reading in 1926, and the Nizam has been looked upon with a certain doubt since that episode.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"Persons are much blamed who do not procure husbands for their daughters before the age of puberty; but the young woman whose parents have neglected this is not considered impure; and it is the lowest ranks that marry earliest because the expense is moderate and because young widows are not among them condemned to celibacy. . . . The marriage here is only a betrothing, as in Behar. Consummation does not take place until after puberty."

(Montgomery Martin: "The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India, surveyed under the orders of the Supreme Government and collated from the original documents at East India House with the permission of the Hon. Court of Directors." Pubd. 1838. Vol. 2, p. 474.)

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Montgomery Martin, in his book "East India," based on an official survey by Dr. Francis Buchanan under the auspices of the East India Company, 1838, remarks (Vol. 1, p. 127):

"Considering the number of large towns there are in those districts (Behar) the number of prostitutes is very small. . . . In Patna a number of the prostitute families are very rich and a few in Behar have trifling endowments in land, but in general they are rather poor. They are not, however, as in Europe, neglected when they become old; their adopted daughters supporting the aged; nor do they acquire the hard-

ened depravity that arises from a sense of being totally despised and unprotected. . . ."

Describing Shahabad, then owning a population of 1,418,780, the author again remarks: "The number of prostitutes is very small, amounting to only 130 houses."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

One of the most scathing indictments ever written about British rule in India, under the East India Company, is to be found in Montgomery Martin's East India, to which I have alluded previously. In the Introduction to Vol. 1 (pages xi on) he says:

> "It is impossible to avoid remarking on two facts which are peculiarly striking:—1st, the richness of the country surveyed and 2ndly, the poverty of the inhabitants."

He goes on to trust that this survey will induce England to apply to India that commercial reciprocity "of which so much is heard with reference to foreign nations, but none at all with regard to our possessions in India," and says:

> "England *compels* (his italics) the natives of British India to receive her steam wrought manufactures at a rate of but 2½ per cent. while she imposes 20 to 30 per cent. on the hand wrought cottons and silks of the Hindoos, whose sugar is taxed 150 per cent. coffee 200 per cent. pepper 300 per cent. rum 500 per cent. etc., when imported into the United Kingdom; and this from a country where England annually levies £20,000,000 sterling, and of which £3,000,000 and upwards is yearly transmitted to London as tribute.
>
> This annual drain of £3,000,000 on British India has amounted in 30 years, at 12 per cent. (the usual Indian rate) compound interest to the enormous sum of £723,997,971 sterling; or, at so low a rate as £2,000,000 for 50 years to £8,400,000,000 sterling.
>
> So constant and accumulating a drain even on England would soon impoverish her; how severe then must be its effect on India where the wages of a labourer is from twopence to threepence a day?" . . .

In his summing up of the whole survey, Introduction to Volume 3, Martin says:

"These facts (sic) . . . all demonstrative of a mass of wretchedness such as no other country on the face of the earth presents; and the continuance of which is a disgrace—a deep and indelible disgrace to the British name. Since this official report was made to Government have any effective steps been taken in England or in India to benefit the sufferers by our rapacity and selfishness? None! On the contrary we have done everything possible to impoverish still further the miserable beings subject to the cruel selfishness of English commerce."

He then repeats the charges made in the Introduction to Vol. 1 and continues:

"For half a century we have gone on draining from two to three and sometimes four million pounds sterling a year from India which has been remittable to Great Britain to meet the deficiencies of commercial speculations; to pay the interest of debts, to support the Home establishment, and to invest on England's soil the accumulated wealth of those whose life has been spent in Hindostan."

Referring to the farmers, he points out that

"a people who with all their industry and possessed of considerable skill are unable to earn more than a 1*d* or 1½*d* or 2*d* a day, and when in want of means to till their land or carry on their looms or smithies are compelled by their necessities to borrow money at 20 to 30 per cent per annum must necessarily be beggared. . . . And when to such a sure cause of misery we have added the commercial injustice which prohibits the Hindoo from having even the same advantages for his dear wrought, high taxed products in the markets of the United Kingdom as the Englishman has for his cheap manufactures in India, can we be surprized at the misery which exists and the utter desolation which must ensue . . . as regards commercial rights England treats India with a despotism which has no parallel in ancient or modern history . . . *the handwriting is on the wall* (original italics)—and if ever a nation deserved punishment and annihilation it will be England should she continue in her present career of injustice to India."

Twenty years later, it will be remembered, the Mutiny broke out.

Martin also agrees with Mead and Torrens as regards the effect of British rule on the upper classes, and says:

"It is also to be observed, and, I think, much to be regretted, that the operations of our systems of finance and law have done more in

twelve years to impoverish and degrade the native chiefs, who succeeded the impure tribes, than the whole course of Muhammedan government" (Vol. 2, p. 345).

It is interesting to note that Francis Buchanan's original survey, which indicated the terrible conditions prevailing in British India, was begun as far back as 1807. Dr. Buchanan worked in the field on this until 1816. His report was filed at East India House, a few copies being sent to the then Government of India. None of it became public until 1838, and no particular action appears to have been taken on it.

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